

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848
IN THE WORKS OF
GEORG WEERTH, ROBERT PRUTZ, JOHANNES SCHERR
AND ADOLF GLASBRENNER.

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of
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Dedicated respectfully
to Georg Büchner
and affectionately
to Pamela Reece.

O Gott, laß dich herbei
Und mach die Deutschen frei,
Daß endlich das Geschrei
Danach zu Ende sei.

Franz Grillparzer

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ABSTRACT

In this work, The German Revolution of 1848 is treated in its literary context. The writings of four contemporary authors - Georg Weerth, Robert Prutz, Johannes Scherr and Adolf Glaßbrenner - are used to illustrate the revolutionary expectation shown in the 'Vormärz' years, the varying experiences of the Revolution itself, and the disillusionment of the Reaction.

The thesis is divided into three sections. The first examines three novels, Weerth's Fragment eines Romans, Prutz's Das Engelchen and Scherr's Eine deutsche Geschichte, in order to ascertain the differing attitudes towards social change in the light of the Revolution. The second section moves from the social schemata expressed in novels to the more directly political satires of 1848 itself. The anti-authoritarian satires of Glaßbrenner, Prutz's pre-revolutionary drama Die politische Wochenstube, and two satirical narratives by Weerth, Humoristische Skizzen aus dem deutschen Handelsleben and Leben und Taten des berühmten Ritters Schnapphahnski, all receive attention in the light of their application to revolutionary conditions. In the third section, the post-revolutionary writings of Scherr and Prutz on the subject of history and literature are analysed in an attempt to assess the attitudes of those writers who became disillusioned with revolutionary activity.

Some of the works selected for examination are minor, and an attempt has been made to show, not necessarily that their literary merit has been overlooked, but that their documentary function in the understanding of an era in which literature and society were closely related, is worthy of consideration.

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INTRODUCTION

This work focuses on 1848, the year of German revolution. It has already been demonstrated sufficiently by many historians that its significance, politically and historically, was great and long-lasting. From the March Days, when successful mass uprisings against the monarchical régimes in virtually every German state followed the republican victory in Paris, to the total defeat of the revolutionary forces less than a year later, the swift succession of events contrasted with the previous thirty years of national quiescence. In one year the historian observes the sudden predominance, the decline and the collapse of Germany's first national parliament, he watches a tentative move towards the long-awaited goal of unity, a short-lived republic in the South, a half-hearted patriotic war against Denmark, the attempts to resolve the problem of Prussian or Austrian hegemony within a federation, the efforts to re-establish a hereditary Kaiser, and finally the reassertion of the reactionary governments.

Although the Revolution forms the core of the present work, the details of its chronology will to some extent be taken for granted. Not the historical events but the peripheral literary activity inspired by and associated with those events will receive detailed attention. The Revolution is the point of departure, but the writings of minor authors who lived through and commented upon its preparation, progress, dénoue-

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ment and aftermath, provide the variations in focus through which the central event will be viewed.

It will be shown that 1848, together with the 'Vormärz' and 'Nachmärz' periods which led up to and away from it, can be treated as a cataclysm of a literary as well as of a political nature. However, as the title of this work indicates, the representatives chosen for a literary analysis of 1848 are not the well-known names of nineteenth century German literature. This fact is partly a consequence of the Revolution itself, and partly a deliberate attempt to seek out those who have often been overlooked. 1848 was a year which produced no literary heroes, for although Heine, Hebbel, Stifter, Grillparzer and Fontane were all writing during the Revolution, it did not mark for them the culminating point which it occasioned in the lives of some of their more obscure contemporaries. The choice of the four authors named in the title contains the justifying factor that for all of them, the year of revolution was both the climax of their previous literary careers and the force which determined their subsequent activity. All four reflect the political restlessness and the opposition to reactionary government which characterise the 'Vormärz' era. Ranging ideologically from moderate liberalism to radical socialism, they all look forward to and welcome the beginning of the Revolution, but because of variations in expectation, their views of the chaotic progress of the later stages of 1848 and their acceptance of the ensuing Reaction, as stated in the literature they produced, differ markedly and afford the reader an opportunity to assess the fragmented impact of 1848 on literary contemporaries.

The selection of four representatives from a diverse social and ideological field involves a certain arbitrariness

and appears to invite accusations of distortion. A wish to^{4.} trace the progress of minor writers whose lack of ability or philosophical resilience prevented them from transcending the events around them has already been stated as a guiding principle, but the structure of the present work should also provide an indication of intention. The writings under consideration exhibit a common preoccupation with revolutionary change, and are linked both thematically and ideologically.

Part I will trace the blueprints for social change in three novels dating from the 'Vormärz', the 'Nachmärz' and the revolutionary period itself. They contain remarkably similar characters, situations and economic forces, but the resolution of the problems discussed depends to a large extent on the author's chronological position with regard to 1848 and his ideological view of the Revolution itself.

In Part II, satirical works produced during 1848 are examined. A less speculative and more polemical approach emerges in writings which have been freed from the strict censorship laws of the preceding years. In its campaign against all forces judged detrimental to the success of the Revolution, the satire of 1848 attacks both the middle classes and the absolutism which sought to reassert itself after the defeats of the March days. Because the time sequence of events in 1848 is so compressed, reactions of exhilaration, suspicion and despair can follow one another in quick succession. These trends will be traced in the satires under consideration.

Finally, Part III completes the study of the literary revolution by treating the later writings of men whose attitudes in the years of the Reaction reveal frequent divergences from those propounded in their works before and during 1848. The disillusionment which remains largely implicit in Parts

I and II emerges clearly in the discussion of theoretical works which attempt to describe, distil or synthesise past experience. This section provides the answers to questions raised in the earlier stages, or establishes the lack of definitive solutions.

The intention behind the tripartite structure just outlined is not didactic but investigative. Beyond a wish to assess writings which have been largely forgotten, no hypothesis is to be proved. The selection of a given work for examination need not, however, imply sanction of its literary merit. Much of what was written in the period under consideration has been forgotten for reasons which are immediately apparent, but the following pages will demonstrate the documentary value of the selected works. It should be recalled that the literary aesthetic of the 1840s demanded a literature that was functional and offered comment on the political needs of society. Only by treating simultaneously the needs, the aspirations and the actions of that society can one appreciate or at least understand the literature which emanated from it.

PART I

ANTICIPATION, INVOLVEMENT AND RETROSPECTION.

THE IMPORTANCE OF 1848 TO SOCIAL STRUCTURES IN THREE NOVELS

BY GEORG WEERTH, JOHANNES SCHERR AND ROBERT PRUTZ.

In the words of Karl Gutzkow, the Revolution of 1848 brought to the surface of political life both 'Vorläufer', intent on the overthrow of ancient institutions and a rapid advance towards democratic republicanism, and 'Nachzügler', who longed for a return to the peace and order of former times.¹ The same polarisation can be observed in the literature produced before and after the great dividing line of March 1848. In order to illustrate the impact of the Revolution on contemporary literature, the sense of anticipation evident in 'Vormärz' writers, the increasing frustration of those involved, and the disappointment of the literary survivors in the period of Reaction, I have chosen three novels which portray the unease in German society of the 1840s, as seen by men of differing political attitudes who all experienced the Revolution at close quarters.

Georg Weerth's Fragment eines Romans,² unpublished until 1956, is thought to have been composed between 1844 and 1847. Because the author was an associate of Marx and Engels and an unqualified supporter of their theories of proletarian revolution, the novel reflects the social views of a man who believes society to be on the verge of violent change. As we shall see, Weerth, partially inspired by the Silesian weavers' uprising of 1844, attempts to project his vision of a social structure in the process of regeneration onto contemporary reality of the 1840s, so that the actual Revolution must have appeared at first to be the beginning of progress towards achievement

1. Karl Gutzkow, Vor- und nachmärzliches Leipzig. Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1850, p. 221.

2. Georg Weerth, Sämtliche Werke in fünf Bänden. Vol. II. Ed. Bruno Kaiser. Berlin, Aufbau, 1956, pp. 147-346.

of his goals. "Diese Revolution wird die Gestalt der Erde ändern,"³ he wrote enthusiastically in March. The fact that 1848 failed eventually to achieve either social or political change meant that for Weerth and his uncompleted novel the Revolution was both culmination and disillusion of his hopes, so that the book remained a fragment, and he admitted to Marx: "An Revolutionen in Deutschland glaube ich nun einmal nicht."⁴

A telling contrast is provided by the long, three-volume novel by Robert Prutz, Das Engelchen, published in 1851.⁵ The author's experience of the 'Vormärz' period and his moderate liberal stance in 1848 are distilled into a post-revolutionary attitude of conservatism, which reflects commercially motivated attention to the enforced political adjustment of the reading public's requirements as much as his own social conscience. Das Engelchen, which bears interesting resemblances to Weerth's novel in its treatment of similar social issues, especially the plight of the weavers, eventually draws a backward-looking, reactionary solution from the ruins of the Revolution, a situation for which Weerth gave no answer.

Balancing the pre-revolutionary Fragment and the post-revolutionary Engelchen is a minor work which may be designated as a rudimentary novel in the form of a didactic tract: Eine deutsche Geschichte,⁶ by Johannes Scherr, written in Zürich as shots were still being fired in nearby Baden, and permeated with the immediacy of direct involvement. Scherr, one of the forgotten men of the 1840s, was a Swabian poet, writer and teacher whose radical outbursts in the Württemberg state parlia-

3. Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 281.

4. Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 359.

5. Robert Prutz, Das Engelchen. Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1851. (Deutsche Neudrucke, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970)

6. Johannes Scherr, Eine deutsche Geschichte (1848-1849). Zürich, G. Kiesling, 1850.

ment of 1848 led to his near-arrest the following year. He avoided certain imprisonment by fleeing to Switzerland, where he immediately gave literary expression to his frustration and despair by writing Eine deutsche Geschichte, a blend of fact and fiction which traces in microcosmic form the aborted progress of 1848.

The selection of these three novels from a diverse field does not necessarily imply a positive value judgement of their literary merit. Scherr's novel, for instance, contains so little refinement that its obscurity is no mystery, although it is invaluable for the purpose of evaluating literary expression of the Revolution. Because it too describes the interrelation of different levels of society during a period of change, it furnishes a neat comparison with the structures created in the other two novels. In each of the following three chapters we shall examine the attitudes of the authors towards the aristocracy, the middle class and the emerging proletariat, and simultaneously evaluate the importance of impending, actual or past Revolution to those attitudes.

Chapter One : The Nobility

I

Georg Weerth and an individual aristocrat

"En me créant, Dieu m'a dit:
Ne sois rien." Pierre Jean de Béranger

Within the bounds of a geographically restricted area, both Weerth and Scherr create a microcosm of the hierarchic structure of German society in the 1840s. At the apex of the social pyramid in each case stands an aristocrat, and the literary expression of the contrast between the attitudes, rôles and positions of the two representatives affords the reader an insight into the reactions of the old order to a revolutionary situation, potential or realised, and also into the social philosophies of the two authors.

Florian Vaßen¹ detects a certain vagueness in Weerth's portrayal of the Baron d'Eyncourt in the Fragment, perhaps traceable to Weerth's lack of acquaintance, in contrast to some of his contemporaries,² with the way of life of the nobility. Instead of examining the political control exercised by the aristocracy at the royal Courts of Germany, he turns to a romanticised concept of an isolated, impoverished, paternalistic noble, resident in an overgrown, debt-ridden Rhineland castle. At the time Weerth was writing, the picture of a formerly resplendent nobleman reduced to humiliating and unaccustomed frugality had become a literary convention, if not a cliché, and a minimal amount of detective work indicates that Weerth had read at least Immermann's Münchhausen,³ in which

1. Florian Vaßen, Georg Weerth. Ein politischer Dichter des Vormärz und der Revolution von 1848/49. Stuttgart, Metzler, 1971, p. 124.
2. Heinrich Laube, for instance, worked as a tutor in a royal household and Franz Dingelstedt served the Württemberg Court.
3. Karl Immermann, Werke in fünf Bänden. Vol. III. Ed. Benno von Wiese. Frankfurt a.M., Athenäum, 1971-73, pp. 56-65.

Freiherr Schnuck-Puckelig-Erbsenscheucher and his daughter Emerentia, still imbued with the consciousness of their social superiority, live in completely penurious surroundings, or the Immermann novel Die Epigonen,⁴ where the spendthrift Count Julius can be rescued from economic doom only through the intervention of a middle-class industrialist.

Weerth's novel opens with a description of the natural features of the Baron's estate, in terms so idyllic that commentators concerned mainly with Weerth's ideology have passed over it with disparaging judgements ranging from "auffällig blaß"⁵ to "mißlungen",⁶ but despite the occasional turgidity of its prose it fulfils an important function in placing the Baron in his milieu, where everything - sparrows, cat, dog and servant - has its place and a kind of harmony reigns in the midst of diversity. The positive terms of the description lead logically to the arrival of the lord and master, whose physical features are enumerated in a similarly laudatory fashion.⁷ The interior of the mansion belies the continuing nostalgic outlook of its inhabitants; large tapestries portray huntsmen and hounds, oil-paintings depict ancestors in armour or in costumes appropriate to falconry, and "alles, was vergangene Tage für schön und komfortabel gehalten, hier war es beieinander."⁸ These words provide an early indication that the Baron's financial difficulties have not been caused solely by his aversion for sound book-keeping or his naiveté in the face of economic

4. Karl Immermann, Vol. II, pp. 547-50.

5. Werner Feudel, 'Georg Weerth. Ein sozialistischer Parteischriftsteller des Vormärz'. In: Weimarer Beiträge Vol. XVIII, 1972, p. 103.

6. Helmut Brandt, 'Georg Weerth, der erste und bedeutendste Dichter des deutschen Proletariats'. In: Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena. Vol. VIII, 1958-59, Heft 2-3, p. 399.

7. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 152-3.

8. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 154.

facts, but by the outdated precepts of honour and convention which forced the nineteenth century aristocrat, permeated with a disdain for the capitalist endeavour practised by the middle class, to imitate in his mansion the splendour and extravagance of the royal Court.

The historical phenomenon of the impoverished nobleman whose inability to accept capitalist techniques leads to his economic ruin is well documented by Ernest Bramsted in his book on the German aristocracy and middle classes.⁹ He suggests that the recurrence of this motif in the literature of the nineteenth century lies not in its universal historical validity, for there were many financially successful nobles,¹⁰ but in the anti-aristocratic tendency of middle-class writers. In the case of Weerth, whom Bramsted does not mention, this assertion, although it appears manifestly true of the later work Schnapphahnski, does not seem applicable. Baron d'Eyncourt is portrayed with undeniable sympathy, and one must keep in mind the fact that Weerth has endowed him with the virtue of generosity to the poor, which makes his economic plight regrettable rather than a cause for satisfaction. In Weerth's own words, as he attempts to analyse the Baron's social position, this man is an honest, patriarchal philanthropist.¹¹ In the sealed-off Rhineland world presented by the author and dominated by the cunning Preiss, the Baron's qualities virtually ensure his vulnerability to the economic opportunism of the society around him.

9. Ernest K. Bramsted, Aristocracy and the middle classes in Germany. Social types in German literature 1830-1900. 2nd ed. Chicago, University Press, 1964, Chapter II.

10. Groups of nobles sometimes united to exploit their estates industrially, e.g. Pless, Henkel von Donnersmark, Schaffgotsch and Ballestrem who dealt profitably in coal and ore in Silesia. (Bramsted, p. 46)

11. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 165.

Weerth does sympathise with the Baron, but not, he hastens to add, as the representative of the West Prussian aristocracy!¹² He exhibits the kind of interest one shows for a pleasant anachronism or, as he puts it, "eines jener still regalierenden deutschen Individuen, (...) halb schon zur Mumie geworden, halb der Gegenwart angehörend, ohne große Trauer um das Vergangene und ohne viel Interesse an der Zukunft."¹³

Somewhat more than a vague sympathy for a sad relic of a former age becomes evident when the Baron, duped by the industrialist and his lawyer into imagining loan money will be readily available, pays a visit to Preiss. In their discussion of the state of the economic system, the patient humanitarianism of the Baron, the nature of whose mission keeps him on the defensive, manages to survive the quick-witted half-truths of the scheming Preiss. The importance of this conversation lies in the fact that the Baron's previously unspecific generosity to the underprivileged takes on a more positive aspect when he champions the cause of the factory workers in the presence of a man who gives the predictable and superficially reasonable answers of capitalism. The Baron, however, is far removed from a socialist standpoint, especially when he concludes, after finding no middle way between the seemingly mutually exclusive doctrines of free competition and monopoly, that industrialisation is essentially distasteful: "Schließlich finde ich wiederum kein Heil bei der Industrie - Unglück für viele, Glück für nur wenige, die den letzten Stürmen zu trotzen wissen."¹⁴ This type of reactionary thinking will be more closely examined in the discussion of Robert Prutz, but at this point it leads

12. The Rhineland had been placed under Prussian control after the Napoleonic Wars.

13. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 164.

14. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 185.

logically to the question of Weerth's purpose in painting a very individual portrait of a beneficent, impoverished, unpolitical and likeable aristocrat in a work dedicated, as Bruno Kaiser characterises it,¹⁵ to the contradictions of German society in the mid-1840s. Let us look first at the disadvantages of such a portrayal in an otherwise ideologically inspired work of literature.

In the context of a society ripe for the upheaval of 1848, with middle and working classes sharing similar attitudes of opposition to the conservative régimes in the German states, the benevolent occupant of the highest position on Weerth's social scale seems somewhat out of place. In his alignment with the proletariat, made quite clear in the novel, and his desire for change of a social nature, Weerth appears to overlook its political adjunct. The nobility which, as personified in the Baron d'Eyncourt, he treats with such deference, still controlled state affairs in the thirty-nine German principalities. Thus any forward movement, either political or social, would presuppose a change in its status. Weerth perceives this change only as a gradual loss of influence¹⁶ but treats it as a matter more for regret than for satisfaction. Instead of creating another Schnapphahnski, who would at least have served to clarify the social forces at work in the pre-revolutionary hierarchy and underline the exploitation, both political and financial, suffered by the proletariat at the hands of all the classes above it, Weerth looks beyond the excesses committed

15. "Eine Darstellung der deutschen Gesellschaft seiner Zeit (...) mit all ihren sozialen Gegensätzen." (Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 10: 'Vorwort' by Bruno Kaiser)

16. "Er [the nobility] hat so wenig Entschiedenenes und Ausgeprägtes, daß er nie mehr dazu kommt, eine Partei zu bilden und auch deshalb schon aufgehört hat, politisch bedeutend zu sein." (Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 163)

in more prosperous days by an aristocracy whose tapestries may well have been produced by weavers living in privation almost as deplorable as that of Eduard's family, and reserves his bitterest criticism for the new enemy, the middle-class industrialist, whose economic might is feared as much by the aristocrat as by the workers. In the type of revolution envisaged by Weerth, the passive Baron would play a minor rôle, but he should not have overlooked the fact that the advancement of his espoused class and its overthrow of the bourgeoisie would presuppose the removal from power of the group which had ruled for centuries - the politically active aristocracy.

The above line of thought probably approximates that of Marxist writers who interrupt their adulation of Weerth to criticise his characterisation of Baron d'Eyncourt as "kaum erträglich und (...) gekünstelt"¹⁷ or "gefesselt vom romantischen Adelsbild."¹⁸ What appears to be a nostalgic digression has no place in a serious social tableau composed by a follower of Marx and Engels. Such a verdict, although justifiable, does not allow for any subtlety on the part of the author. The moderate liberal attitude evident in the Baron's conversation with Preiss places him on a plane with the liberal aristocrats well known in literature and in reality since the time of Fürst Pückler-Muskau, the noble author of travel books in the 1820s and 1830s.¹⁹ "For the intellectual aristocrat," says Bramsted, "individualism is the real root of his liberal attitude. Because he desires to live his life as an individual in the sense of the Renaissance, he turns against the restrictive limits of his

17. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 10. ('Vorwort' by Bruno Kaiser)

18. Frank Wagner, 'Bemerkungen zu Weerths Romanfragment.' In: Weimarer Beiträge Vol. XVIII, 1972, p. 193.

19. Literary reincarnations of Pückler-Muskau, chiefly noted for Briefe eines Verstorbenen, can also be seen in Spielhagen's Problematische Naturen and Gutzkow's Ritter vom Geiste.

Estate; because he strives for wider fields, he finds congenial natures in other strata and classes."²⁰ Spurred by this discontent within the confines of his own social level, such an aristocrat may find a political outlet in leadership of causes fundamentally opposed to the conservatism innate in other members of his own caste. Thus, in 1848, the elected president of the National Assembly in Frankfurt was the aristocratic Heinrich von Gagern, while the man chosen by the Assembly as regent of the new German nation was an Austrian prince noted for his liberal sympathies,²¹ and the second most important parliament of 1848, the Prussian 'Nationalversammlung', was chaired by the son of a noble military officer, von Unruh. Although it is useless to speculate on the outcome of the novel if Weerth had completed it in the light of the events of 1848, it is reasonable to assume that the Baron was destined to play a rôle consistent with the detailed exposition and his careful study of Engels's book on the condition of the workers in England.²² In the revolutionary clamour he might have roused himself to use his voice of liberal philanthropy for the benefit of the villagers who trusted him so implicitly.²³ This would not necessarily conflict with Weerth's characterisation of the Baron's type: "Sie haben sich daran gewöhnt, politisch Null zu sein,"²⁴ for even the members of the 'Paulskirche' Parliament were often far from professional politicians. Frequently in 1848, people with no political experience were thrust into positions of prominence on the basis of renown in other fields, as in the well-documented case of the philosopher David Strauß, compelled

20. Ernest K. Bramsted, p. 175.

21. Archduke Johann, whose 'Trinkspruch' was especially famous: "Kein Preußen und kein Österreich!"

22. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 267-9.

23. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 158.

24. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 164.

to take up a seat in the new Württemberg 'Landtag', who complained in letters to his friends of the incongeniality of his new occupation.²⁵

Weerth may have had completely different intentions for the Baron in a finished novel, but the factors we have discussed would indicate a rôle more significant than providing paternal background to a nineteenth century inter-class romantic intrigue and becoming a passive victim to a successful industrialist. The subtlety of his character belies the simplistic and doctrinaire interpretations of Weerth's intentions as furnished by some Marxist analysts.

As the Fragment stands, however, we must admit to a certain contradiction in Weerth's portrayal of the aristocracy. In contrast to the the weakness of the liberal individual he himself has created, the aristocracy of 1848, as the success of the ensuing Reaction demonstrated so palpably, was far from being "politisch Null". He has imposed the precepts of the Communist Manifesto, presupposing a struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat, whereas German society of the 1840s had not even destroyed the absolute power of monarchs and Court aristocracy. In French terms, it had not even experienced its 1789.

Any contradiction in Weerth's novel must at least partially reflect the contradiction in a society so far behind its Western European neighbours. Has Weerth evaded the problem of aristocratic power by showing us only a weak nobleman, or has he dramatised the pre-revolutionary situation by suggesting a possible future alignment of an individual aristocrat, who reads the works of Engels, with the working class? In the improbability of both these solutions we see reflected the social

25. David Strauß, Ausgewählte Briefe. Ed. Eduard Zeller. Bonn, Emil Strauß, 1895, pp. 208-26.

uncertainty felt by many writers of the 'Vormärz' period, even by one equipped with implicit faith in the theories of Marx. In their failure even to approximate the outcome of the Revolution, we can appreciate, even in this single aspect of the Fragment, the reasoning behind Dietrich Allert's assertion that the author's failure to complete his novel had a single, unmistakable and far from accidental cause: "Sicherlich deshalb, weil das, was Weerth gestalten wollte, unter den gesellschaftlichen Bedingungen noch nicht vorhanden war."²⁶

II

Johannes Scherr and a 'Vormärz' despot

"Odi profanum vulgus
et arceo." Horace

Whatever the genre in which one places Scherr's Eine deutsche Geschichte - short story, novel or pamphlet; literature, treatise or propaganda - it remains certain that for the purposes of examining 1848's reflections in literature, this work is admirably suited. It was written in 1849, shortly after the author's inflammatory speech to a mass meeting in Reutlingen, his escape from the agents of the government in Stuttgart, and his arrival in Switzerland. The events of the Revolution, as the dates 1848-1849 in the subtitle suggest, not only inspire but determine the main rhythm of the story.

In terms of our present analysis of the aristocracy, Scherr's portrayal of Graf von Holzen affords an invaluable contrast with Weerth's Baron, as they occupy totally different ideological and political standpoints. The reason for this divergence need not be sought in the social philosophies of the two authors, whose attitudes towards the proletariat show

26. Dietrich Allert, 'Der erste Dichter des deutschen Proletariats'. In: Aufbau XIV, Heft 3, 1958, p. 325.

great similarities, but rather in Scherr's relative lack of subtlety. In his primitive black/white characterisations, more suited to a pamphlet than a novel, he has allowed his palpable anger at the outcome of the long-awaited Revolution to overrule any attempt at literary refinement, with the result that critics of literature have, with a few exceptions, ignored him.²⁷

Scherr's resentment of social classes which had frustrated the Revolution²⁸ did not permit him to conceive of an untypical aristocrat such as is created by Weerth, but this very fact serves to balance our view of the nobility in 1848.

Graf von Holzen rules as prime minister over the Duchy of Gerolstein, a fictitious pocket principality of the kind satirised most effectively by Georg Büchner in Leonce und Lena, but nonetheless possessing several real counterparts, such as the ridiculous Duchy of Reuss-Lobenstein-Ebersdorf, "the smallest kingdom with the longest name."²⁹ He upholds the status quo of "Metternichtigkeit", a word invented and used frequently by Scherr, with a combination of brutality and skilful intrigue. He is described as being perspicacious, knowledgeable, wealthy and endowed with a lasting faith in the contemptibility of mankind: "Wer als Sklave sich traktiren läßt, muß als Sklave traktirt werden,"³⁰ a maxim with which Scherr, having learnt its validity in the reversals of 1848, is forced to admit an unwilling agreement. Again and again he and his contemporaries saw their calls to action fall on the deaf ears of those who allowed themselves to be treated as the slaves of absolutism. Georg

27. Apart from an Introduction by Otto Haggenmacher to the novel Schiller, there remain one book devoted to him (by Willibald Klinker), one dissertation (W. Lotz) and one article (am Rhyn).

28. The Introduction makes this resentment quite clear: "Wahrt euch, ihr aufgeblähten Falstaffs! der Heißsporn ist nicht todt und seine letzte Schlacht nicht geschlagen!" (Scherr, p. 7)

29. J.G. Legge, Rhyme and Revolution in Germany. London, Constable, 1918, p. 168.

30. Johannes Scherr, pp. 30-1.

Herwegh, for instance, pleads with the German people during the 'Vormärz':

"Horch auf, der letzte Würfel fällt,
Dein Abend, der ist nah.
Noch einmal stehe vor der Welt
In deiner Größe da!"³¹

but the Revolution brings him to a sorrowful realisation that men of Holzen's kind have been more attuned to the German's potential for militancy:

"Deutschland, sie sagen, du hängst den Kopf.
Mir geht ins Herz das Gestichel -
Du seist ein tatenloser Tropf.
So sagen die Leute, o Michel!"³²

Graf von Holzen, like the non-fictional General Jellachich who confidently occupied Vienna in October 1848 to the cheers of the same multitudes which had earlier welcomed the revolutionary advances,³³ had never suffered from the delusions of Herwegh and his fellow-writers, but operated from a position of strength, sealed off from any contact with members of other classes.

Scherr continues his characterisation of the Count by describing his attitude to the other groups in society. In his eyes, both field and peasant exist to be exploited, and "Staatskunst war ihm daher konsequentermaßen gleichbedeutend mit Ausbeutungskunst und er betrieb das Regieren durchweg als eine kaufmännische Spekulation."³⁴ For each social stratum he has

31. Georg Herwegh, Werke in einem Band. Ed. Hans-Georg Werner. Berlin & Weimar, Aufbau, 1967, p. 149.

32. Georg Herwegh, p. 193.

33. Adolf Pichler (Gesammelte Werke Vol. II. Munich & Leipzig, Georg Müller, 1905) comments on the Jellachich phenomenon with considerable cynicism: "Diese Bürger haben nicht mehr die eisernen Sehnen deutscher oder lombardischer Freistädter, sie küssen jedem Sieger - ob Student, ob Kroat, ob Baschkir, gleichviel - mit gewissenhafter Ergebung den Fuß und sehen dem Wechsel der Herrscher mit derselben Hirnlosigkeit zu wie dem Wechsel der Schlüssel auf dem wohlbesetzten Mittagstische." (p. 168)

34. Johannes Scherr, p. 32.

a supercilious designation: the proletariat is the plough, the middle classes the pack-mules, the clergy provide a religious backdrop while the king constitutes a figurehead for the real work done by the aristocratic ministers and officials. In this treatise Scherr dramatises and possibly exaggerates the exclusiveness and solidarity of the nineteenth century German nobility. These criteria, notes Bramsted, "become especially obvious when the prestige and power of the closed group is threatened by the rivalry of other groups."³⁵

For Scherr's Count, a major source of rivalry emanates from within his own household: from his son Heinz, who has adopted the theories and appearances of a liberal democrat, and to a lesser degree from his idealistically inclined daughter Rose. Faced with ideological insubordination from within his family, which he has always ruled as if it were a state,³⁶ he exhibits to a marked degree the characteristics elicited by Bramsted in his study of aristocratic exclusiveness: "Under the pressure of incipient liberalism, the German aristocracy, which had split into many regional and religious groups, combined together after 1815 to form the so-called 'aristocratic chain', a union which maintained a religious and political neutrality in order to concentrate on the protection of common class interests."³⁷ The unceasing exploitation of other social groups by the Count can thus be interpreted as the expression of a siege mentality, a defensive attitude of self-preservation in the face of impending change. To his children, whose hearts, according to Scherr, are not "verholzt",³⁸ he exhibits an icy

35. Ernest K. Bramsted, p. 153.

36. Johannes Scherr, p. 32.

37. Ernest K. Bramsted, p. 153.

38. Johannes Scherr, p. 33. Like Weerth, he puts the names of his characters to ironical use, e.g. Holzen, Rose; Preiss, Jammer.

civility just short of open hostility.

Heinrich, the future Count, shows in a more determined manner many of the characteristics of Weerth's Baron, especially in his sympathy with proletarian aspirations, but by joining a democratic club, gives more practical application to such sympathies. Partly as a reaction against the court circles favoured by his father, he joins at first the liberal opposition, but in accordance with Scherr's cynical view of liberalism,³⁹ finds its precepts inadequate and, after meeting an intelligent proletarian who will concern us in a later chapter, moves closer to the 'Volk'. In an obvious allusion to 'Jungdeutschland', Scherr has him composing poetry on the subject of Germany's pre-revolutionary misère and asking his new worker-friend Robert for an opinion. The latter's reply is an indictment of the 'Vormärz' writers' degree of real empathy with those whose cause they professed to espouse: "Es ist Schade, daß man so viele Bücher gelesen haben muß, um euch Poeten zu verstehen," and he advises Heinrich, "das Volk erst kennen zu lernen, bevor ihr es belehren, erheben, unterhalten wollt."⁴⁰ Scherr appears to share Robert's doubts about the aristocratic class-deserter, especially in view of the equivocal behaviour of Heinrich later in the story; perhaps he considers him little more than a 'Hofdemokrat', the species for which he has especially cynical words in one of his historical works: "Wie man sich früher einen Zwerg, einen Mohren, einen Affen oder Papagei von seltener Art gehalten hatte,

39. See his description of it in Von 48 bis 51. Leipzig, Wigand, 1868: "Der feige, blasirte, impotente Ungeist der Mittelmäßigkeit, Philisterei und Biedermaiererei hielt alles in seinem Bann und Zwang." (Vol. II(1), p. 10)

40. Johannes Scherr, Eine deutsche Geschichte. Zürich, G. Kiesling, 1850, pp. 46-7.

so hielt man sich jetzt einen Hofdemokraten."⁴¹ However, the initial genuineness of Heinrich's convictions makes him no more popular with the Court than with his father.

A chapter entitled sarcastically 'Wie man regiert'⁴² provides an insight into the governmental workings of a pre-revolutionary state or at least Scherr's vision of such operations. Like Weerth, he had had no first-hand experience of administration, having been occupied during the 1840s in translating and writing, although his brief experience as a member of the 1848 'Landtag' in Stuttgart may have allowed him to observe the practices of Chief Minister Römer and his associates. With his obsequious agent Laufer, Holzen discusses the opposition within the state and how it may be eliminated, silenced or bribed. The prudence of Robert, the leader of the local 'Arbeiterverein', has frustrated the first two alternatives, and the third solution does not impress Laufer, whose knowledge of the young man's integrity causes him to doubt the Count's faith in universal corruptibility. But the aristocrat again demonstrates the exclusiveness of his class which prevents him from acquiring any insight into the mentality of other classes.

The ensuing scene,⁴³ in which the nobleman, after sending for Robert on the pretext of repairing a lock, questions him on his political theories and the state of Europe, constitutes the climax to the novel and, in its intensity and precision, a microcosm of the ideological and social conflicts of 1848. Although it begins as an interrogation, inspired by

41. Johannes Scherr, Von 48 bis 51. Leipzig, Wigand, 1868, Vol. I, p. 424.

42. Johannes Scherr, Eine deutsche Geschichte. Zürich, G. Kiesling, 1850, pp. 72-82.

43. Johannes Scherr, pp. 85-101.

curiosity on the part of the questioner and characterised by hesitance in the examinee, it rapidly develops into a confrontation, albeit polite, between two social philosophies. Their clash, despite the opposing nature of the views expressed, is not the kind of exchange where two monoliths stand in attitudes of 'Aneinandervorbeireden', delivering closely-argued soliloquies while avoiding any interpenetration of ideas. The confrontation between aristocrat and proletarian is a series of dagger thrusts, with each struggling for the upper hand, sometimes leading the opponent into a dangerous situation only to have the blade turned aside before the moment of incision. Let the following abbreviated extracts serve as examples:

Robert: Ich habe nicht gefunden, daß das Volk in England frei ist.

Holzen: Ei, Sie scheinen einigermaßen schwer zu befriedigen, mein Guter. Und was sagen Sie zu Frankreich?

Robert: In Frankreich herrscht die Korruption, wie in England das Privilegium.

Holzen: Sie halten also die französischen Zustände nicht für glückliche?

Robert: Nein.

Holzen: Da haben Sie sehr recht. Die französische Verderbniß gibt Europa ein abschreckendes Beispiel von dem, was bei Revolutionen herauskommt. (...)

Robert: Bei verfehlten Revolutionen, ja. Man muß eben keine Revolution halb machen oder sich um die Früchte der etwa ganz gemachten hintennach wieder betrügen lassen. Letzteres erfuhren die Franzosen 1794 und Ersteres 1830. ⁴⁴

And a second example:

Robert: Gewiß, die Bourgeoisie würde baldigst umkehren wollen auf dem Pfade der Revolution, allein es kommt Alles darauf an, ob nicht inzwischen das Volk stark genug geworden, um den Angstmännern den Rückweg zu vertreten.

Holzen: Und wird das Volk jemals so stark werden?

Robert: Wenn es in seiner Mitte die rechten Führer findet, warum nicht?

Holzen: Und wird es in seiner Mitte die rechten Führer finden?

Robert: Ja, und wenn jetzt nicht, später desto gewisser. ⁴⁵

In the present chapter we are concerned with the attitude of the Count, whose line of questioning, constantly biased

44. Johannes Scherr, pp. 89-90.

45. Johannes Scherr, pp. 96-7.

towards bolstering the status quo, is continually out-manoeuvred by the ostensibly straightforward and honest replies of the journeyman. Frequently Scherr takes the reader inside the minds of the duellists, as each prepares his responses and evaluates the words of the other. The Count's attitude ranges from amusement at the young man's forthrightness to anxiety at the thought that his ideas of social reform may have penetrated the Metternich system and infiltrated the population, especially when Robert predicts the course of a future revolution in Germany. Both are perspicacious prophets, for Robert envisages the alliance of proletariat and bourgeoisie against the nobility, while the Count foresees a quick abandonment by the bourgeoisie of revolutionary activity. On the journeyman's rejoinder, that the populace may by that time be capable of carrying on alone, hinges the outcome of the impending upheaval.

Implicitly conceding a points victory to his opponent, the Count changes the subject by offering him a foreman's job in the state locomotive workshops. Robert has just refused on the grounds of his intention to emigrate to America when there emerges a 'deus ex machina' in the form of news from Strasbourg that the February Revolution has broken out in Paris. Possibly a stylistic weakness, it nevertheless seals Robert's moral victory and reinforces the immediate practical application of the theories just discussed by the two men.

The Count's rôle in the story is now almost over. After locking Robert in the cellar by means of a ruse, he hastens to quell the rising tide of revolution within the state of Gerolstein, advising the duke to reject the demands of the opposition liberals, whereupon the crowd attacks and sets fire to his mansion. Like many a 'Vormärz' governmental chief,

including Metternich, on whom Scherr probably based his character, Holzen is forced to flee to England. In accordance with the usual precedent of 1848, he is succeeded by a liberal aristocrat, whose character is probably inspired by Heinrich von Gagern. Significantly also named Heinrich, the old Count's son imagines in his liberal enthusiasm that he can keep faith with the 'ancien régime' represented by the duke and simultaneously guarantee the freedoms won for the people, just as the new liberal premier in Prussia, Ludolf von Camphausen, whom the Revolution had brought to power, assured Queen Charlotte on March 30 that the existing order would be maintained along with the new liberties.⁴⁶

Once the storming of the palace is over and the unfortunate Rose, killed accidentally during the attack on her father's mansion, has been buried, the novel takes on an elegiac tone. Delegates are sent to the Frankfurt Parliament, freedom of the press proclaimed, the black-red-gold tricolor hoisted, but with the benefit of hindsight and the fact that he has mixed sufficient fact with fiction to make the outcome a certainty, Scherr reproaches the German people, in a chapter entitled 'Armer Michel',⁴⁷ for allowing their oppressors to reassert themselves: "Armer Großmuthsnarr, warum hast du im März 1848 deine zornvoll aufgehobene Faust nicht zermalmend niederschmettern lassen auf alle die Arglistigen, die damals demuthsvoll deine Füße umwedelten?"⁴⁸ Quickly putting aside his sorrow, Heinrich takes up his new duties, confident of his ability to achieve liberal goals, but the very fact of his aristocratic birth serves to underline the essentially un-

46. Jürgen Kuczynski, Die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter unter dem Kapitalismus. Vol. I. Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1961, p. 202.

47. Johannes Scherr, pp. 135-41

48. Johannes Scherr, p. 135.

changed nature of the post-revolutionary situation. In the wider context of 1848, the debate which formed the climax to the story was won not by Robert but by the aristocratic Count who doubted the ability of the people to carry on a revolution abandoned by the middle class.

When Heinrich meets his friend Robert again in May 1849, there takes place another ideological confrontation in which the proletarian, cured of his theoretical idealism, speaks forthrightly and bitterly of the thwarted Revolution. A comparison of the two passages reveals an evocative expression of the change wrought by 1848 and a neat structural balance in the story. This time, once his initial sorrow of beholding Rose's grave has passed, Robert dominates the discussion by means of denunciations of the aristocrat's defences. He acts as a mouth-piece for the author's own hatred of liberalism, which is described as the paper used to disguise the fissure between throne and populace.⁴⁹ Robert disparages the 'Märzerrungenschaften', reiterating the frequent claim that they did nothing to help the common man, he denies Heinrich's protestation that justice now prevails, pointing to those imprisoned for championing civil rights, and blames the liberals for helping to perpetuate the 'anciens régimes'. The young aristocrat is left finally to contemplate the destruction of his illusion that he had remained faithful to the precepts formerly held in common with his proletarian friend.

Within the tight framework of a short novel, Scherr has re-enacted 1848 with a cast of characters who act as representatives of classes in society rather than as individuals. Compared with the Baron d'Eyncourt, the Count and his son are

49. Johannes Scherr, p. 150.

cardboard figures, but their words and actions demonstrate forcefully the continuing power of the aristocracy. In the contrast between the two types of aristocrat, we see the contrast between the social change reflected in a novel written before the Revolution and in one written towards its end; basically, an urge for change has developed into an awareness that change is impossible at present.

Chapter Two : The industrial Middle Class

I

Georg Weerth and a powerful bourgeois

"Alles, was nicht monopolisiert werden kann, hat keinen Wert, sagt der Ökonom. (...) Wenn wir sagen, hat keinen Preis, so ist der Satz richtig für den auf dem Privateigentum beruhenden Zustand." Friedrich Engels

By far the strongest character in Georg Weerth's Frag-
ment is the factory owner Herr Preiss. Just as the passivity of Baron d'Eyncourt can be traced partially to the post-Napoleonic loss of aristocratic influence in the Rhineland, the area of Germany with which Weerth was familiar, so too is the growing importance of the middle-class industrialist a feature of development in this region during the 1840s.

At a time of rising industrial production, Western Prussia, with its high concentration of population, including twenty-five percent of Germany's entire industrial work force, became a centre of economic activity. Between 1840 and 1850, Germany's share of the world's railways increased from seven to sixteen percent, consumption of iron increased fivefold and the number of Prussian share companies rose from sixteen to 102 between 1825 and 1850, while their total capital grew from 34.4 million Marks to 638 million.¹ Because of the fragmentation of Germany and the consequent lack of a co-ordinated export policy, foreign trade increased by only ten percent, as compared with fifty percent in England, and so there remained a heavy dependence on imports, especially in 1847, when bad harvests and resultant price rises caused the bankruptcy of many industries which specialised in the production of foodstuffs.

Together with the increased economic power of the in-

1. These statistics derive from a comprehensive set of tables in Jürgen Kuczynski, pp. 160-8.

dustrial middle class there developed a consciousness of its potential strength in other fields and gradually what Marx and Engels call "die oppositionelle Schilderhebung der deutschen Bourgeoisie," who were no longer content to endure the "Druck eines halbreudalen, halbbürokratischen monarchischen Regimes."² Continually frustrated by society's reactionary overlay, they sought a political outlet. The centre of governmental and bureaucratic power, situated far away in Berlin, exerted irritating pressures in the form of restrictive regulations on the formation of new companies, the issue of shares and the siting of new railways. As Bramsted points out, certain sectors of the aristocracy opposed all forms of capitalist activity and deliberately created difficulties.³

In the character of Herr Preiss, Weerth has accelerated the process of bourgeois development to a point where, at least within the community created in the novel, it has already triumphed over the aristocracy. The author was far more familiar with the industrial middle class than with the stratum represented by the Baron, for he worked in 1842 as a private secretary to his father's cousin Ferdinand aus'm Weerth, owner of a textile factory in Bonn⁴ and, as the play on words in the names

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2. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Werke. Vol. VIII. Berlin, Dietz-Verlag, 1974, p. 14. N.B. Marx and Engels tend to use the term "feudal" in a loose sense, not just to describe the relationship between aristocratic landowner and peasant but as a synonym for "reactionary" or "conservative". Similar problems are posed by the word "absolutism"; although it is doubtful if it meant the same in the 1840s as in the eighteenth century, it is used in the present work as a convenient term for non-representational government.
 3. Ernest K. Bramsted, p. 45f. This subject is also discussed by Helmut Böhme, Prolegomena zu einer Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte Deutschlands im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1968, p. 30, and by Kuczynski, p. 165-6, who recounts efforts of a Saxon aristocratic landowner to halt a nearby railway by claiming 25,000 Taler compensation for sheep dirtied by smoke from locomotives and for time lost when workers interrupted their labours to watch the passing trains.
 4. Karl Weerth, Georg Weerth. Der Dichter des Proletariats. Leipzig, Hirschfeld, 1930, p. 11.

Preiss and Weerth would suggest, he based the character of the successful bourgeois on his wealthy relative. But, as Karl Weerth notes in his biography of Georg, the two men enjoyed good relations despite the difference in their political views,⁵ and it is important to remember this fact when examining the fictional character, who appears superficially to be totally negative.

In the scene which introduces him to the reader, when he plans the further advancement of his business by forcing the Baron to sell his family estate, Weerth makes the following observation about Preiss: "Seine ursprüngliche gute Natur, die von Zeit zu Zeit immer wieder in dem kaufmännischen Herz aufblitzte, war für einen Moment hervorgetreten."⁶ His mercenary nature, his indifference to the sufferings of his employees and his intrigues to procure financial advantage are thus not simply the external manifestations of an intrinsically evil being, but the normal reactions of one involved materially in the "extensive phase" of the development of capitalism. Just as in France and England during the early days of capitalist expansion, the German industrialists of the mid-nineteenth century increased productivity by extending the working day, adjusting wages to subsistence levels so as to force workers to bring their families into the work force as well, and thus ensuring that available labour increased with no loss of competitiveness.⁷

Preiss, who intellectually salutes the Baron's philanthropic efforts to prevent village children from endangering their health by working in the textile factory, rejects them

5. Karl Weerth, p. 17.

6. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 179.

7. Jürgen Kuczynski, p. 264.

on a practical or commercial level and thus cannot possess the inner harmony still enjoyed by both aristocrat and proletarian. This fact is constantly apparent in his words, which are usually quite opposed to his thoughts. Of his son August, who is seemingly incapable of such intellectual dishonesty, he remarks sarcastically: "Er kann nicht einmal lügen! Gott sei bei mir, es ist zum Närrischwerden!"⁸ He himself uses an elaborate veneer of courtesy, industriousness, wit and feigned humility as a mask for his determination to further his own interests. His conversation with the Baron,⁹ as climactic a clash of ideologies as the confrontation between Graf Holzen and Robert in Eine deutsche Geschichte, deals with the state of German industry, which has been forced to sail a painful middle course, as the hypocritical Preiss claims, between the Scylla of competition and the Charybdis of monopolies, so as to prevent the dismissal of thousands of dependent employees. Weerth is obviously well acquainted with a factory owner's philosophy, for although, as Vaßen points out,¹⁰ the inherent contradictions in his words are evident and further belied by his affluence, the argument is superficially convincing, and the Baron, whose objections to Preiss's earlier statements on the welfare of the workers and the purpose of industry have been perspicacious, is finally reduced to an admission of non-comprehension.¹¹

The rôle of the industrialist in a future period of change is intimated in his championing of the argument for protective tariffs against foreign competition. Purely an economic crusade in the early stages, it contains the potential for subsequent extension into a political rôle commensurate

8. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p.217.

9. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 180-8.

10. Florian Vaßen, p.126.

11. See p. 13 above.

with his greater influence. Weerth explains this phenomenon in words which go to the heart of 1848 and its initial success:

"Er [Preiss] gehörte der Bourgeoisie an, einer Klasse, die bisher ohne allen Einfluß im Staate war, die aber anfang, sich zu rühren, die an den Mittelklassen Englands und Frankreichs in der letzten Zeit ein zu anspornendes Beispiel hatte, als daß ihr nicht die Lust gekommen wäre, sich ebenfalls zu entwickeln und ein Wörtchen mitzusprechen."¹² But he feels that the time has not yet come for him to step forward as the representative of the Rhineland bourgeoisie, that the necessary support might not be forthcoming and that a political party could not yet be formed. So in the meantime he continues his agitation for protective tariffs in the hope of drawing together his fellow industrialists and uniting them under a commercial banner before attempting to realise his political aspirations.¹³ It is interesting to note that Weerth's other Herr Preiss creation, in Humoristische Skizzen aus dem deutschen Handelsleben, which will be treated in a later chapter, does not act, when the Revolution comes, in accordance with the predictions made for his namesake in the Fragment.

In this discrepancy between Preiss of the 'Vormärz' and Preiss of 1848, Weerth has demonstrated the selfish and indecisive motivations of a single bourgeois representative, whose enthusiasm for political influence and the defeat of the aristocratic bureaucracy suddenly wanes in the face of actual revolution. Preiss could have echoed the words of the old liberal, Friedrich Harkort, who stated in early 1848: "Revolution? Das ist ganz unmöglich. Wir wollen in Preußen friedliche, volkstümliche Reform und eine liberale Verfassung, aber unter keinen

12. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 212.

13. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 213-14.

Umständen Revolution!"¹⁴ Preiss, constantly concerned for his personal financial advancement - from his marriage for the dowry it brought him,¹⁵ to the harsh treatment of his workers - would undoubtedly be among the first to withdraw from any revolution endangering private property, would forget his old ideals and co-operate with the Reaction. As Kuczynski points out, with special reference to 1848: "Eine bürgerliche Revolution, deren Aufgabe die Lösung des Hauptwiderspruchs Bourgeois-Feudale ist, kann nicht gelingen, wenn der tragende Kern der Bourgeoisie schon vor der Revolution gegen die Revolution eingestellt ist!"¹⁶ A future alignment of Preiss with anxious propertied reactionaries would accord well with his philosophy of life: "Die ganze Welt ist in mancher Weise offenbar am Schlechterwerden, am Zurückgehen. (...) Man muß daher mit der Zeit fortschreiten und ebenfalls schlechter werden und zurückgehen; durch das Rückwärtsgehen machen wir hier offenbar einen Fortschritt und stehen dann wieder auf der Höhe der Gegenwart,"¹⁷ surely a recipe for conciliation with the Reaction still to come.

Weerth's main hope for a continuation of the bourgeois revolution to a point where the proletariat would be strong enough to take over lay not with Herr Preiss but with the alternative bourgeois types represented in his three sons, especially in the most highly developed of the three, the conscientious August, who is prompted by his emotions to reject the inhumanities of the paternal factory he supervises, and is converted to a confused and unhappy philanthropic socialism. Philosophically he has advanced a step further than the Baron, whose sympathy for the proletariat and detestation of industry fit

14. L. Berger, *Der alte Harkort*. Leipzig, Baedeker, 1902, p. 335.

15. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 309-10.

16. Jürgen Kuczynski, p. 200

17. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 220-1.

the category of "feudal socialism" described contemptuously by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto.¹⁸ August on the other hand, although he hates the industry with which he is involved, is aware of its future potential: "Er ehrte aber ihre guten Elemente, weil er das Welterlösende in ihnen erkannte und davon überzeugt war, daß die Industrie einst die Menschen glücklicher machen würde."¹⁹ So he remains in the factory office, attempting to alleviate the hardships of the workers in accordance with the inspiration he has gained from the study of the works of Fourier, Saint-Simon and Weitling, thus playing his part in socialist advancement by altering the system from within.

Gradually the brutalities of Herr Preiss are redressed in secret by his son; wages previously curtailed are restored to their full level, dismissed workers are reinstated, mistakes overlooked and accounts adjusted to the benefit of the workers.²⁰ His actions have been motivated, notes Weerth, not only by socialist literature but also by a sentimental reaction to the pitiful sight of the workers on payday: "Er warf die Tische rechts und links zur Seite und stürzte hinaus, sein Gesicht mit den Händen bedeckend, mit klopfendem Herzen - bitterlich weinend."²¹

A confrontation between August and the proletarian Eduard, artistically counterbalancing the discussion between Preiss and the Baron, leads to direct authorial criticism of August's philosophy. His words demonstrate confidence in the ability of benevolent capitalists to relieve proletarian suffering ("Wenn die Arbeiter ihren Herren nur vertrauen, da werden sie sich über kurz oder lang vielleicht auch nicht in ihren

18.Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Vol. IV, p. 482.

19.Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 221.

20.Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 269-75.

21.Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 233.

Hoffnungen betrogen sehen"²²), a theory which places him, according to the Communist Manifesto's list of socialist aberrations, in the category of "conservative or bourgeois socialism."²³ Aware of August's helplessness, and desirous of securing the reader's agreement, Weerth dismisses him in harsh terms, characterising him as "ein philanthropisches Maultier," "ohne jede Festigkeit, um seinen Gedanken Rundung und Ausdruck zu verleihen."²⁴

But in shooting him down so decisively, Weerth may well have indirectly put paid to his own hopes for a bourgeois revolution powerful enough to set the proletariat in motion. His condemnation of August, who is nonetheless the most positive bourgeois representative in the novel, brings him close to a realisation that the impending Revolution could not be borne steadfastly by middle-class enthusiasts of August's ilk, devoid of a secure philosophical basis. Essentially the conservative socialist differs little from his feudal counterpart; the idealistic vision of industry in the future can scarcely be attained by means of indefinite plans for co-operation between capitalists and employees.

The other two sons of Friedrich Preiss epitomise alternative bourgeois ways of life. Daniel the philosopher, too engrossed in noble thoughts even to notice what goes on in his father's factory,²⁵ represents the type of ivory tower intellectual for whom 1848 was only an unwelcome disturbance. "Der Himmel befreie uns von aller Freiheit!"²⁶ exclaimed Arthur

22. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 285.

23. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Vol. IV, pp. 488-9. August seems to advocate what the Manifesto calls "administrative Verbesserungen, die an dem Verhältnis von Kapital und Lohnarbeit nichts ändern."

24. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 287.

25. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 214.

26. Arthur Schopenhauer, Sämtliche Werke, Ed. Dr. Paul Deussen. Vol. I. Munich, R. Piper, 1929, p. 655.

Schopenhauer irritably in a letter of January 1849, and David Strauß commented superciliously on the politics of 1848: "Es ist einem, der sich bis dahin ausschließlich mit Wissenschaft, Gemüth und Kunst abgegeben, und nun an die Politik soll, wie einem, der von Ambrosia auf Sauerkraut und Blutwurst angewiesen wird."²⁷ Although Daniel takes no part in the action of the novel, his inclusion is justified in terms of the real Revolution, during which literati such as Grillparzer, Stifter, Bauer, Stirner, Menzel, even Heine and Hebbel, as well as Strauß and Schopenhauer, did look on with detachment and distaste.

The youngest son Julius represents the bourgeois who aspires to the grandeur and refinement of the aristocracy. In terms of Bramsted's differentiation of types who are motivated by a positively imitative relationship to the aristocracy, he represents the parvenu, openly striving for aristocratic magnificence.²⁸ Like the Baron's daughter Bertha, with whom, in a completed novel, he would have carried out a protracted love affair, he spends hours reading novels while the rest of the world works, he wears elegant clothes and pursues the noble sport of hunting.²⁹ The only useful function for this decadent youth, in his father's eyes at least, would be a financially advantageous marriage to a banker's daughter from Basel, but his love for the aristocratic Bertha fulfils the all but compulsory nineteenth century literary convention of 'mésalliance', providing constant scope for sorrowful partings, inter-class intrigues and the emphasis of social differences, but it also constitutes an ironic if contrived counterpoint to his brother August's fascination for the proletarian Marie, sister to Eduard

27. David Strauß, p. 226.

28. Ernest K. Bramsted, p. 192.

29. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 290-1.

and spur to August's already emotional desire to assist the factory employees.

Towards the end of the Fragment, Weerth introduces a further negative bourgeois, partly as a foil to Preiss, partly as a necessary adjunct to Julius's matrimonial intrigue, but simultaneously a type destined to play an important part in the coming Revolution: the half-hearted Christian nationalist, Herr Jammer,³⁰ who still basks in the glories of the Napoleonic Wars of Liberation, while following, unseeing and unthinking, the policies of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, "mit Gott, für König und Vaterland." He has exploited his family business to the utmost before giving it up for more profitable ventures, is willing to sell his niece to the highest bidder, and combines with the industrialist to deceive the Baron into imagining his debts larger than they are.

Weerth has thus created a small constellation of middle-class types in varying stages of readiness for a coming upheaval. Just as in the portrayal of a Baron who bears little resemblance to the governing aristocracy of 1848, so too do we find a bourgeoisie moving through a trajectory which has been programmed during the 'Vormärz' and thus fails to coincide with the events of the Revolution. The self-awareness of the industrial class had not developed to the point where it was ready to defend and promote its interests in a political party, while the enthusiasm of 'Bürger' such as August could not carry them on beyond the successes of March. Weerth has indeed portrayed characters readily recognisable in contemporary reality, but overall, as components in a plan for social change, he may have expected too much of them.

30. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 314-21.

II

Robert Prutz and the evils of industrialisation

"Our Queen reigns over two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners and are not governed by the same laws.

You speak of... said Egremont hesitatingly.

The rich and the poor." Benjamin Disraeli

Unlike the two novels we have so far examined, Das Engelchen was completed after the Revolution although it is set in the period immediately preceding it. This single fact explains to a large extent its divergence from the novels of Weerth and Scherr, despite the similarities of its subject matter. Robert Prutz has been harshly judged by twentieth century critics unsympathetic to the requirements of the mid-nineteenth century reader, but beneath the extraordinary convolutions of plot, he has attempted to create a picture of society in miniature, while simultaneously fulfilling the requirements which would make the book commercially successful. Unlike Weerth and Scherr, intent on resolving their social philosophies in the form of more or less tendentious works, Prutz aimed to bring milder social theories to the attention of a wide section of the reading public.³¹

In examining Prutz's portrayal of social classes and contrasting it with the 'Vormärz' analysis of Weerth or the mid-revolutionary tract of Scherr, one is immediately faced with the difficulty of separating characters from the intrigue which engulfs them and in more than one case results in completely changed identities. The successful industrialist Wol-

31. Erich Adler, a generally hostile critic, admits to the popularity of Das Engelchen (Vol. III, 'Nachwort', p. 1), but detailed statistics are unavailable.

ston, it transpires, was originally a lowly worker, the master weaver's son Reinhold turns out to be the illegitimate child of a baroness, while the mysterious, semi-aristocratic von Lehfelddt is the offspring of an illicit liaison between a royal minister and the master weaver's sister Lene. Continually Prutz compromises his already limited social insights by subjecting them to unlikely considerations of plot.

However, since the actual social function of the characters during the course of the novel proves to be a more significant determinant of their actions and attitudes than a variety of accidents of birth, we shall treat them as representatives of the classes they inhabit for most of the story. Wolston, despite his lowly origins, corresponds in thought and deed to Weerth's Herr Preiss, and we shall discuss Reinhold as a 'petit bourgeois' flung down into the proletariat although he ultimately manages to rise out of it.

Wolston occupies a position of power in the novel but he remains a shadowy figure, at least partly because Prutz, unlike Weerth, was unfamiliar with the world of capitalism, whose workings were outside the experience of one involved principally in academic and journalistic pursuits. His uncertainty and his emotionally based hostility to the threat posed by industrialisation to the small tradesman prevents him from allowing his creation the slightest positive quality, a concession which is wisely granted by Weerth.³² Wolston, a character firmly within the black/white Dickensian tradition, is a less convincing and a less rounded personality than Preiss, but he exhibits many of the same qualities. Both authors

32. On the subject of Weerth's characterisation of Preiss, Vaßen (p. 126) comments: "Eine derartige Schwarzmalerei würde Weerths Intention einer differenzierten Darstellung des bürgerlichen Typus widersprechen," which pinpoints the mistake made by Prutz.

oppose the bourgeois industrialist who constitutes an obstacle both to Weerth's vision of the day when the workers will control their own industries, and Prutz's dream, as shown in the novel's conclusion, of a return to handcraft production. Thus, although they are treated as the enemy out of differing motives, Preiss and Wolston play similar rôles.

The key to Wolston's nature is exploitation in the cause of self-advancement. As his story is revealed gradually through those who have suffered, he is shown to have stolen another man's industrial invention,³³ worked himself up to a position of responsibility in the factory of an Englishman whom he has deceived into financial ruin and consequently suicide, married the Englishman's wife and returned to Germany equipped with the wealth and expertise to build his own factory.³⁴ In the village of the novel, his position is unchallenged. Apart from the background figure of the royal minister, Prutz has included no aristocrats who might have continued to enjoy an anachronistic social precedence. In Prutz's world, as in Immermann's, the successful bourgeois no longer aspires to the status of a 'Schloß'; he already inhabits one.

Wolston falsifies his wife's will so as to disinherit his stepdaughter Angelica ('das Engelchen') unless she complies with his financially motivated choice of a husband for her,³⁵ he achieves respectability by marrying a baroness³⁶ and cherishes his son Julian presumably as the means of perpetuating his industrial empire.³⁷ But the exploitation of his workers, in keeping with the "extensive phase" of early capital-

33. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, pp. 268-74.

34. Robert Prutz, Vol. III, pp. 123-33. (The 'Justizrath's' story)

35. Robert Prutz, Vol. III, p. 454.

36. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, p. 299.

37. Robert Prutz, Vol. III, p. 341: Wolston intends naming the new wing of his factory after Julian.

ism,³⁸ arouses Prutz's anger most of all. In two lengthy digressions he denounces the degeneration and suffering of the populace brought about by industrialisation. Whereas Weerth places the blame for conditions which he describes in very similar terms on the bourgeois operator,³⁹ Prutz laments the workers' loss of human dignity and self-respect as well as health and financial security,⁴⁰ but proceeds to blame the institution of industry itself, "wo die Maschinen rasseln und die Öfen geheizt werden mit dem Mark unserer Söhne und Töchter" and, in the words of the craftsman Werner, he asks rhetorically: "Seht ihr nicht, wie der Satan seine Stätte aufgeschlagen hat unter Euch und seine Nüstern schnauben vor Wollust?!"⁴¹

At no time does Wolston express any interest in politics, in uniting his fellow industrialists against the machinations of an off-stage aristocracy represented by the spy and 'agent provocateur' von Lehfeldt, or in using his considerable financial might for any purpose other than advancing his own prosperity. "Ich bin ein Geldmensch," he tells Angelica, "und ich muß es den Nachkommen jener Glücklichen, welche nicht nötig haben, für Geld und Gut zu sorgen, überlassen, die Ideen der neuen Zeit zu verwirklichen."⁴²

Since, by placing Wolston at the apex of the village's social pyramid, Prutz has omitted an aristocratic level,⁴³ the principal class interaction occurs between the middle and working classes. Because Prutz envisages social progress, not in terms of class conflict like Weerth, but in terms of conciliat-

³⁸ See p. 31 above.

³⁹ "Sieh, alter Preiss, das ist deine Welt! Was hast du getan!" (Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 230)

⁴⁰ Robert Prutz, Vol. I, p. 129.

⁴¹ Robert Prutz, Vol. I, p. 387.

⁴² Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 91.

⁴³ The fact that Wolston's new wife is of noble birth has little relevance to Prutz's social schema; he is not interested in a "Welt des leeren höfischen Glanzes." (Prutz, Vol. II, p. 408)

ion, the few scenes of communication between characters of differing status usually display reflective rather than ideological character. The best example is to be found in the visit of Angelica, a Cordelia figure of improbable virtue, and the embodiment of human perfection, to the only man worthy of her hand in marriage - Reinhold, apprentice to the impoverished 'Handwerksmeister'. Although the two have enjoyed a long-established friendship, the difference in their social status is immediately emphasised when Reinhold explains his apparent coldness as a manifestation of inferiority: "Verzeihen Sie, gnädigstes Fräulein, Sie sind jetzt eine große, vornehme Dame, es schickt sich nicht mehr..."⁴⁴ Thereafter, until the moment when Reinhold does eventually reassert himself, Prutz seems to emphasise one of the principal consequences of the impoverishment he has condemned: the loss of the worker's self-respect and dignity. But it is with Angelica, the stepdaughter of the capitalist Wolston, that we are concerned in this chapter. Her reaction to the pitiable state of the workers is an emotional one: "Dies muß geändert werden; armer Meister! armer Reinhold!" and she resolves immediately on the "Begründung irgend welcher Einrichtungen und Anstalten, durch welche diesem Elend in einer zweckmäßigen und nachhaltigen Weise könne abgeholfen werden,"⁴⁵ indeed a vague if well-meaning blueprint for the relief of social injustices. In terms of the various manifestations of philanthropy already discussed, she has turned her first confrontation with proletarian suffering into a systematised version of Baron d'Eyncourt's generosity, without August's theoretical background. When Reinhold then goes on to make an emotional declaration of submission to the new industrial

44. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 184.

45. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 188.

world order which robs its victims of life itself, Angelica's reaction is one of shock and disbelief: "Nein, nein, (...) Sie sollen leben, Reinhold! leben und glücklich sein, ja Glück und Leben verbreiten."⁴⁶ She leaves without persuading him to return to his association with the sickly Julian, but their exchange has left her with a plan whose formulation and execution, interspersed with digressions, occupies approximately half of the novel's second volume and illustrates varying middle-class reactions towards the proletariat.

Like most of Prutz's ideas, Angelica's plan is a modest one. As the early twentieth century critic Ernst Hohenstatter points out: "Prutz führt keinen Gigantenkampf gegen die allmächtige Hierarchie; (...) er begnügt sich mit kleineren, ja mitunter kleinlichen Mitteln,"⁴⁷ and into the latter category fits 'das Engelchen's' intention to assist the factory workers by founding an institution to care for their children during working hours. The author hastily assures his readers that she is no socio-political bluestocking or potential parliamentarian, which are qualities he does not admire in women; instead she is motivated by the sweet satisfaction resultant from comforting fellow-orphans and easing their lot.⁴⁸ The professor whose ideas on the subject of women's rôle in society have inspired her, seems to have sympathised with the goals of limited female emancipation as propounded by the writers of the 'Jungdeutschland' movement,⁴⁹ while her own motives bear a strong resemblance to those of the initiators of a

46. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 194.

47. Ernst Hohenstatter, Über die politischen Romane von Robert Prutz. (Dissertation) Munich, Knorr & Hirth, 1918, p. 37.

48. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, pp. 350-3.

49. See Ludolf Wienbarg, Wanderungen durch den Tierkreis. Hamburg, Hoffmann & Campe, 1835, p. 201: "Weiber, euer Los wird sich verbessern. Noch einmal wird die Welt verteilt werden, und ihr sollt nicht leer ausgehen."

'Verein für das Wohl der Hand- und Fabrikarbeiter', founded in 1844 in response to the poverty exposed by the Silesian weavers' uprising, and operated in accordance with the principle of raising the moral as well as the economic standards of the workers, of building bridges of co-operation between social classes.⁵⁰

The variety of reactions to Angelica's intention on the part of the other inhabitants of the middle-class fortress on the hillside is indicative of their attitude to the workers. Wolston opposes it not only on commercial grounds but also because of his dislike for his stepdaughter, while the Baroness supports the plan as a means of improving her own low standing in the minds of the villagers who, to her chagrin, speak more highly of Angelica than of her.⁵¹ Herr von Lehfeldt and Julian's teacher Herr Waller, both apparent suitors for 'das Engelchen's' hand, support the plan in order to court her favour; Lehfeldt with alacrity, Waller reluctantly. The latter prefers the support of the poor to remain the affair of clergymen like himself. One of Prutz's more despicable creations, Waller views charity as a weapon, a means of emphasising the abjection of the recipient, of reminding him forcibly of his utter dependence on the generosity of the donor, and furthermore, by relating the award of benefactions to spiritual repentance, he exerts a moral dominance beyond the normal authority of a pastor in a small community: "Drohungen und Bußpredigten auf der einen, Geschenke und kleine Vertraulichkeiten auf der anderen Seite, heute schöne fromme Gesangbücher und morgen noch schönere warme Strümpfe."⁵² His attitude corresponds

50. Karl Obermann, Die deutschen Arbeiter in der ersten bürgerlichen Revolution. Berlin, Dietz-Verlag, 1950, p. 30.

51. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, pp. 359-63.

52. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 416.

to the view held by conservative members of the 'Verein für das Wohl der Fabrikarbeiter' in the mid-1840s; the workers' rôle in the organisation was to be maintained at a level of passivity, and any mass gatherings avoided. "Man könne nicht die Gefahren verkennen," declared a report published in 1845, "welche aus einem zu starken Hinzutreten der ungebildeten Klassen erwachse, wodurch überspannte und maßlose Hoffnungen erweckt würden."⁵³

To a man like Waller, Angelica's plan for assistance on the basis of human dignity and basic rights appears almost subversive, but he supports it verbally whilst painting a forbidding picture of its consequences to the villagers.⁵⁴ In the presence of Wolston he voices his opposition on the grounds that assistance to the proletariat will make them overconfident and dangerous: "Der Mensch ist nicht geschaffen, durch Güte gelenkt zu werden; er braucht einen starken, eifernden Gott, den er fürchtet!" But because his wife is involved, Wolston allows operations to proceed.⁵⁵

Towards the end of the novel, when the revolution does come, or rather the revolt, for it is artificially induced, clumsily led and swiftly quashed, Wolston and the wealth he represents constitute the initial target for the ire of the crowd, but the full force of their fury is directed at the outward sign of their bondage, the machines. The inhabitants of the 'Schloß' remain passive while the rebels are subdued by Lehfelddt's royal troops. Wolston, whose complicity in smuggling, falsification of the terms of his first wife's will and other intrigues has come to light, commits suicide, the

53. Rheinische Jahrbücher zur gesellschaftlichen Reform. Vol. I. Darmstadt, 1845, p. 198.

54. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 422.

55. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, pp. 441-8; quotation p. 444.

Baroness and Waller disappear to Italy, while Angelica and Reinhold are united in a presiding rôle over a new world order in microcosm.

In his concern to account for the multiplicity of threads in the narrative, Prutz loses sight, in the end, of the social message bequeathed to him by the events of 1848. Changed identities and the swift removal of many characters from the scene militate against clarity of purpose, while the idealised solution he imposes bears little relation to the state of affairs after 1848, as it is not only unreal but localised, the triumph of a single proponent of 'petit bourgeois' 'Handwerk'. Apart from its historically valid emphasis of the industrial class's disinclination for political activity, and the creation of recognisable types, Prutz's novel, especially its primitive dénouement, exhibits few signs of an authorial maturity of insight instilled, one might have expected, by the experience of a major social upheaval.⁵⁶

56. Hohenstatter (p.48) speaks of a "scharf revolutionären Tonart" in Das Engelchen as a consequence of the author's experience of 1848. Apart from Prutz's indictment of working conditions, based more on his observation of the Silesian weavers than on 1848, this claim is unsubstantiated.

Chapter Three : The infant Proletariat

I

Georg Weerth and a hopeful vision of the future: 1847

"Alles zieht, aber nichts
schlägt durch." Julius Campe

"Der erste klassenbewußte Proletarier der deutschen Literatur"¹ has become an admiring and virtually universal subtitle to any discussion of Eduard in the Fragment eines Romans, but in terms of Engels's description of the novel's author as "der erste und bedeutendste Dichter des deutschen Proletariats,"² the collocation is apt, even inevitable. When one compares Eduard's attitudes to those of textile production workers in other novels of the 1840s, as Hermann Schneider has done in his article 'Die Widerspiegelung des Weberaufstandes von 1844 in der zeitgenössischen Prosaliteratur,'³ in which Immermann's Epigonen, Willkomm's Weißer Sklaven, Ungern-Sternberg's Paul and, of course, Prutz's Engelchen are shown to offer no real solution to the contemporary industrial misère, it is evident that Eduard's confidence in the efficacy of strikes, the class struggle and eventual overthrow of the ruling industrial class breaks new ground. Not for Weerth the escapist solutions of Immermann's return to agriculture, Willkomm's suggested emigration to America⁴ or Prutz's destruction of machines followed by the restoration of hand weaving; his identification with, rather than merely sympathy for, the working class, his association with Karl Marx and his acquaintance with a more socially aware proletariat in England provided him with a firm basis

1. Bruno Kaiser (in: Weerth, Vol. II, p.11), Florian Vaßen (p. 134), Dietrich Allert (p. 324) and Werner Feudel (p. 103).

2. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Vol. XXI, p. 6.

3. In: Weimarer Beiträge 1961, pp. 255-77. Chronologically, Schneider's inclusion of Die Epigonen in his analysis cannot be upheld; Immermann's novel was completed eight years before the uprising.

4. Especially in his novel Die Europamüden.

for creating a man of the future.⁵

Just as the process of industrialisation advanced during the 1840s, so did the old order of master and apprentice degenerate, with resultant hardship for those involved in it. As the supply of apprentices dwindled, masters were gradually forced to take factory jobs themselves, and the Prussian statistics for 1846 show that the number of 'Meister' (457,365) actually exceeded the number of apprentices (384,783).⁶ The competition from cheap British imports and the production techniques used in the "extensive phase" of capitalism, mentioned in the previous chapter, caused a situation whereby both the workers engaged in traditional hand production and those in the new factories could scarcely earn a subsistence wage. Karl Obermann has estimated that the average daily wage in 1848 was 2Sgr. 8Pf., but a large loaf of bread cost 5Sgr., as did one pound of meat;⁷ consequently, in an isolated but indicative survey made in the Landshut district, 29,985 inhabitants out of a population of 39,596 were found to be unable to support themselves without public assistance. A series of bad harvests between 1844 and 1847, but especially in 1847, when the price of potatoes nearly doubled, transformed a problem into a crisis.

The simultaneous trends of impoverishment and a move to factories hastened the development of a proletariat which, under the earlier system based on handcraft, had not existed. This process was closely observed by Marx and Engels, who

5. Weerth worked in Bradford 1842-1845; during this time he made the acquaintance of Engels in nearby Manchester and, with his friend Dr MacMichan, visited the dwellings of the poor in the "Hexenkessel des modernen Kapitalismus" (Karl Weerth, p. 20.)

6. Mittheilungen des Centralvereins für das Wohl der arbeitenden Klassen. 1. Jahrgang 48/49. Berlin, 1849, p. 155.

7. Karl Obermann, p. 17.

described it in their Manifesto of February 1848:

Die bisherigen kleinen Mittelstände, die kleinen Industriellen, Kaufleute und Rentiers, die Handwerker und Bauern, alle diese Klassen fallen ins Proletariat hinab, teils dadurch, daß ihr kleines Kapital für den Betrieb der großen Industrie nicht ausreicht und der Konkurrenz mit den größeren Kapitalisten erliegt, teils dadurch, daß ihre Geschicklichkeit von neuen Produktionsweisen entwertet wird.⁸

Weerth too, as an associate of Marx and especially Engels, with whom he had become friendly during the composition of Die Lage der arbeitenden Klassen in England, was aware of the nature of the process, but the militant character he gives to proletarian leadership, although forecast by Marx and Engels, was probably also inspired by the first violent action carried out by German workers, the Silesian weavers' uprising of 1844. Aroused, like Michael Kohlhaas, out of a natural passivity by a sense of injustice, the leaders of the weavers enforced the rudiments of organisation and discipline on what was more than a mere hunger revolt. Their destruction of the industrialists' property was selective, striking only at what they considered to be the source of their oppression and sparing more benevolent capitalists, while they trusted in the justice of the authorities which ultimately crushed them.⁹ In a letter of 1844 to his brother Wilhelm, Weerth makes an important comparison between the English and Silesian workers, indirectly formulating one of the major premises of the Fragment, on which he may well have already begun to work: "Ich bin davon überzeugt, daß in kurzem derselbe Spektakel hier losbricht, wie Ihr ihn in Schlesien gehabt habt, und der Unterschied wird nur zwischen diesen beiden Ereignissen der sein, daß in Schlesien der

8. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Vol. IV, p. 469.

9. See Hermann Schneider, and Hans Schwab-Felisch, 'Die Weber - ein Spiegel des 19. Jahrhunderts'. In: Gerhart Hauptmann, Die Weber, Frankfurt a. M. & Berlin, Ullstein, 1959, pp. 73-113.

Arbeiter ins Loch kommt und hier der Arbeiter ans Ruder."¹⁰ 51.

The means by which the German workers might also be guided out of the "hole" towards the "helm" is the principal problem posed by the Fragment and one in which Eduard is destined to play a major rôle.

The best-known literary work on the subject of the weaver uprising, Gerhart Hauptmann's Die Weber, contains a character remarkably similar to Eduard and presumably based on the same historical person. Moritz Jäger also arrives unexpectedly from outside, presents a hale and hearty appearance in contrast to the weavers, teaches them the militant song 'Das Blutgericht' and inspires them with hatred of the factory owner Dreißiger.¹¹

Weerth's Eduard, fresh from England, is more than a re-incarnation of a Silesian weaver or a Moritz Jäger, although his situation as leader of a community of oppressed workers is similar. His greater awareness of social forces is based on travel outside Germany, in a country of more advanced development. Many restless German 'Handwerker' travelled through Europe during the 1840s, mainly in Switzerland and France, although an official 'Wanderverbot' for 'Handwerker', dating from 1835 and motivated by fears of subversive foreign influences, was still in force. However, it was so ineffective that Georg Herwegh, for instance, was able to gather a large number of radical German exiles around him in Paris at the outbreak of revolution and later at the beginning of his abortive invasion of South Germany in April. Perhaps the best-known of those who brought back foreign experience to fellow workers in Germany was Stephan Born, a travelling 'Handwerker' who joined the 'Bund der Kommunisten' after becoming friendly with

10. Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 141.

11. Gerhart Hauptmann, Acts II and IV.

Engels in Paris, worked enthusiastically in liaison with other radicals in Southern France and Switzerland, wrote an article attacking a critic of Marx, Karl Heinzen, and returned in 1848 to Berlin where he became the leader of the first 'Arbeiter-kongress'.¹²

Despite these echoes in reality, Eduard is still a man of the future who, in long speeches, voices his creator's aspirations for social change. Commentators who admit his importance as the first class-conscious worker in German literature are nonetheless uneasy about his character as a whole. "Dieser Leitartikel redende Eduard,"¹³ begins Kaiser, while Feudel describes his speeches as "steif und thesenhaft"¹⁴ and Vaßen complains that he is "zu sehr Sprachrohr seines Autors."¹⁵ These comments are all valid insofar as they judge Eduard's speech in accordance with an implicit standard of normal proletarian language, without making allowance for the consequences of a more idealistic approach already demonstrated by Weerth in his portrayal of the Baron. Artistically he establishes a direct parallel between the aristocrat and the proletarian, who are both impoverished and subject to domination by the middle-class industrialist, by introducing them with detailed and sympathetic descriptions of their milieux.

Just as the hillside castle has become overgrown and desolate since its upkeep has been an impossible financial burden for its owner, so too is the poverty of the weavers reflected in the appearance of their settlement, which is bi-

12. Wilhelm Friedensburg, Stephan Born und die Organisationsbestrebungen der Berliner Arbeiterschaft bis zum Berliner Arbeiterkongress, August-September 1848. Leipzig, Hirschfeld, 1923.

13. Bruno Kaiser in: Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 11.

14. Werner Feudel, p. 103.

15. Florian Vaßen, p. 134.

sected by muddy tracks leading to fetid huts with crumbling walls, and windows stuffed with rags or straw.¹⁶ The house of the Widow Martin, Eduard's mother, differs from its neighbours in its cleanliness, the mark of continuing self-respect in the midst of poverty. The mother has been prevented from working by illness, her daughter Marie must work long hours beyond the end of the factory day, and the younger daughter Gretchen has been unable to receive any education.

When Eduard returns home unexpectedly after two years in England, the physical contrast between the muscular, hearty traveller ("ein wilder, muskulöser Geselle; Hals, Brust, Fäuste und Schenkel - alles war bei ihm im schönsten Ebenmaße und prächtig entwickelt"¹⁷) and the anaemic lethargy of his mother and sisters foreshadows an intellectual confrontation between radicalism and quiescence. Without the benefit of foreign experience as a contrast to their own situation, Frau Martin and Marie defend Herr Preiss as the means by which they are saved from total impoverishment; any associated evils they are prepared to accept or to leave to divine judgement. Eduard however, whose English sojourn has given him articulation as well as theoretical certainty, sweeps their objections aside and exposes the true motives of their employer. In Eduard's view, which differs from that of his Silesian counterparts, "good" capitalists do not exist, only varieties of evil ones. There are those who care for their workers as one cares for a good horse, those who moderate their treatment of their employees for fear of the law and those who enjoy such positive relations with law-enforcers that they can do as they please within their four walls. To the last category belongs Herr

16. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 189.

17. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 194.

Preiss, "ein Mensch, dem es einerlei ist, ob alles um ihn her zugrunde geht, sofern er nur Geld dabei verdient."¹⁸

Weerth constantly emphasises the fact that Eduard's superior insights emanate from his English experience, from his observation of production methods, the attitudes of the workers and the theories expressed at Chartist meetings. Presumably Weerth thus reproduces the philosophical change he himself underwent, moving away from the epicurean tone of his early lyrics to an enthusiastic commitment to the proletariat ("ich freue mich von Herzen, daß ich ein Proletarier bin, der Religion, Eigentum und Vaterland mit bescheißen hilft"¹⁹) and to communism ("ich gehöre zu den 'Lumpenkommunisten'"²⁰). In the novel, Eduard takes every opportunity to contrast the German workers with their more advanced English counterparts. A special example is described in the payment of wages, a ritual in which the demeanour of the English proletariat demonstrates their appreciation of the nature of their relationship to the bourgeoisie: "Sie wissen, daß die Herren nicht ohne die Arbeiter fertig werden können und daß nächstens eine Stunde schlägt, wo es zwischen diesen beiden Klassen zu einer genaueren Abrechnung kommt,"²¹ but the German workers, new to industrialisation and still bound "im schönsten leibeigenschaftlichen Verhältnis"²² to Preiss, have yet to be schooled in the phenomenon of class conflict and still express grateful thanks on reception of their wages.

In detailed and emotive terms Weerth proceeds to describe the appearance of the factory employees as they file towards

18.Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 199.

19.Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 141.

20.Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 172.

21.Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 226-7.

22.Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 227.

the paydesk, each group more unhealthy than the last - the dye-workers, the printers, the weavers ("bleich, gebückt, hustend und langsam daherschleichend, ein frühes Grab vor den trüben, stieren Augen, Trümmer von Menschen..."²³) and finally the children ("entnervt schon und gefoltert von der Arbeit, ohne Fleisch auf den Lippen, ohne Blut in den Adern, ohne Gehirn im Kopfe."²⁴) The shocking toll on the human constitution exacted by early industrialisation is well documented in the literature inspired by the Silesian uprising, and there are almost identical indictments in Prutz's Engelchen, which also describes the scene of wage distribution, in Willkomm's Weisse Sklaven and, as early as 1836, in Immermann's Epigonen.²⁵ But Weerth differs from these authors in that he does not blame the process of industrialisation itself but its bourgeois master: "Sieh, alter Preiss," he concludes, "das ist deine Welt. Was hast du getan!"²⁶ and in the character of Eduard, whose physical strength and mental abilities so far surpass his fellow workers, he sees the main hope for future advancement.

By means of strikes and the education of German workers, Eduard hopes to bring about eventual change. "Mit den Fabriken muß es aber anders in der Welt werden,"²⁷ he assures Marie, and suggests that Preiss will ultimately be forced to dance to the workers' tune, but towards the end of the Fragment he already foresees a situation which implies an accomplished proletarian revolution: "Vielleicht kommt bald einmal die Zeit,

23. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 229.

24. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 230.

25. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, pp. 119-32; Ernst Willkomm, Weisse Sklaven. Leipzig, Wigand, 1845, pp. 126-30; Karl Immermann, Vol. II, pp. 419-22.

26. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 230.

27. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 200.

wo wir auch ohne den Herrn Preiss froh werden."²⁸ Although these prescriptions for future action are vague, one must remember that Eduard has just begun his work of ideological proselytising, so that the means of achieving the final goal cannot yet be clear.

Counterbalancing the confrontation between Preiss and the Baron in the first part of the novel is the meeting between August and Eduard, an unsubtle demonstration of the vulnerability of bourgeois socialism in conflict with communism. The scene is brief, but Eduard's dismissal of benevolent middle-class efforts to relieve industrial abuses and his rejection of charity for the workers leave August in what he slowly comes to regard as an untenable situation.²⁹ Weerth has given dramatic expression to the Marxist theory that there can be no long-term proletarian co-operation with capitalism, and no exceptions, so that an alliance between Eduard and August is impossible while the latter retains his allegiance to the Preiss dynasty.

The danger inherent in the creation, within a contemporary novel, of a social type embodying the author's aspirations for the future, becomes especially apparent in Eduard's speech to his fellow workers on the subject of the English proletariat.³⁰ Although it begins and ends as a conversation, its bulk consists of a monologue covering four pages, as if Weerth could not imagine the reaction of the German workers to these new concepts. Indeed he states that most of the workers do not understand Eduard at all. The old and the new do not conflict but simply co-exist as monoliths, without the interaction

28.Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 341.

29.Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 284-6.

30.Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 249-57.

of ideas evident in the dialogue between Preiss and the Baron. No doubt commentators who have described Eduard as a speaker of political editorials have had in mind principally this solid block of propaganda. As Vaßen points out: "Ähnlich wie in den philosophischen Gedichten spricht Weerth (...) die neuen Ideen nur aus, sie sind jedoch nicht gestaltet; ihre Verbindung zu den Personen und der Handlung bleibt weitgehend äußerlich."³¹

In a completed novel, Eduard would doubtless have continued his indoctrination of the workers to the point where, at a time of crisis, he could organise them into a powerful force. This was in fact a principal concern of the working classes during the early days of the 1848 Revolution, when large 'Volksversammlungen' in Berlin and other cities led to the formation of a 'Zentralkomitee für Arbeiter' under the direction of Stephan Born. Similar to Eduard in many ways, Born did not believe in "Forderungen nach der Republik und nach sozialen Rechten. (...) Diese Dinge ergaben sich nach Borns Auffassung von selbst, wenn die Organisation der Arbeiter eine genügende Stärke erlangt hätte,"³² and so, in accordance with his organisational priorities, he was instrumental in bringing about the first 'Arbeiterkongress'.³³ But the fact that by early 1849 he had vanished into obscurity indicates that his qualities, like Eduard's, were out of place in a period of faltering middle-class enthusiasm and embryonic proletarian development.

For Weerth, who had worked on the Fragment between 1844 and 1847, the year 1848 proved to be both climax and 'non plus ultra'. "Deutschland war auch 1848 noch ganz überwiegend ein

31. Florian Vaßen, p. 134.

32. Karl Obermann, p. 126.

33. Wilhelm Friedensburg, pp. 98-9.

Bauernland," Wilhelm Mommsen reminds us, "und damit für sozialistische Bestrebungen noch kaum reif."³⁴ Thus the direction of social progress sketched in the Fragment was shown to be a vain hope, a misjudged appraisal of class characteristics. The fact that Weerth's novel ends abruptly on such an expectant note constitutes a mute testimony to the frustrated aims of the 'Vormärz' writers.

II

Johannes Scherr and a defiant vision of the future: 1849

"Wir sind geschlagen, nicht besiegt. In solcher Schlacht erliegt man nicht." Ernst Moritz Arndt

"Geboren und erzogen inmitten des Volkes, seine Not kennend, seine Leiden mitfühlend, habe ich, frühe zur Selbständigkeit gehärtet, mir gelobt, so lange mein Herz schlagen wird, so lange mein Geist denken und meine Hand die Feder führen kann, der Anwalt zu sein der Armen gegen die Reichen, der Sprecher der Unterdrückten gegen die Unterdrücker - so wahr Gott mir helfe!"³⁵ Thus did Scherr declare his solidarity with the proletariat three years before the outbreak of the Revolution. During the Revolution itself, when he was the most outspoken member of the Württemberg Parliament, fulminating against right wing members and involved in flamboyant gestures such as the hurling of a burning portrait of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV into Stuttgart's Feuersee,³⁶ he was described by

34. Wilhelm Mommsen, Größe und Versagen des deutschen Bürgertums. Munich, R. Oldenbourg, 1964, p. 151.

35. Johannes Scherr, Das enthüllte Preußen. Winterthur, Steiner-sche Buchhandlung, 1845, p. 389. Although Scherr does not use the term "proletariat" in the quotation given, he does on other occasions: see the chapter in Eine deutsche Geschichte entitled 'Aristokrat und Proletarier'.

36. This event is described in Tim Klein, Schicksal und Abenteuer 1848. Munich & Leipzig, Wilh.-Langewiesche-Brandt, 1914, p. 212, and in Otto Haggenmacher, 'Johannes Scherrs Leben und Schaffen'. In: Scherr, Schiller. Leipzig, Max Hesses Verlag, n.d., p. XVIII.

other members of the 'Landtag' as a communist,³⁷ but as Karl Gutzkow has pointed out in his analysis of 1848,³⁸ communism was often used by the conservatives as a synonym for socialism or radicalism, and even Prince Schwarzenberg of Austria was accused of communist sympathies when he opposed the restoration of aristocratic privileges.³⁹

Unlike Weerth, whose commitment to Marxism is clearly and unambiguously reflected in his works, Scherr's ideology is more emotionally based, less specific, and alters considerably during the many years he continued to write after the Revolution. As he says, he wants to be the advocate of the poor against the rich, but the direction in which he intends to lead them remains cloudy. One of his most specific prescriptions for the future is to be found in the Introduction to Eine deutsche Geschichte where, in the form of an encouraging letter written to a republican lady friend during the dying days of the Revolution, he counterbalances the pessimism of the novel with a possible theoretical solution. Despite the defeats of 1848, his hope rests with the Fourth Estate, and he succeeds in treading a narrow path between bitter disappointment and future confidence, a course also followed by Ferdinand Freiligrath ('ich war, ich bin - ich werde sein'⁴⁰) and other literary survivors of the Revolution. In Scherr's eyes the Third Estate or middle class, personified in that stock figure of philistinism, 'der deutsche Michel', has demonstrated its spiritual bankruptcy in the fiasco of the Frankfurt Parliament, whose continual compromises with absolutism have deprived it of all authority, so

37. David Strauß, p. 208.

38. Karl Gutzkow, 'Deutschland am Vorabend seiner Größe oder seines Falles'. In: Gutzkow, Gesammelte Werke Vol. X. Jena, Hermann Costenoble, n.d., p. 45f.

39. Wilhelm Mommsen, p. 150.

40. Ferdinand Freiligrath, Gedichte. Stuttgart, Reclam, 1964, p. 96.

that the Fourth Estate must ultimately accept the task of founding a democratic republic. In 1849 he cannot predict when this will come about, but he concludes: "Es ist ganz unmöglich, daß es lange so bleibe, wie es jetzt ist."⁴¹

The political message of the Introduction relieves in advance the despair of a story based on the catastrophic events of 1848. Without it the fate of the novel's proletarian hero would be totally in vain. Whereas Weerth abandoned his creation when faced with the political reality of 1848, Scherr is forced by the same reality to kill his. Like Eduard, Robert is an idealised figure, a splendid physical specimen who has transcended the impoverishment of his surroundings by means of industriousness, travel and study, thus occupying a respected position among his fellow workers and those whose political sympathies bring them into association with his 'Arbeiterklub'. His character is revealed gradually as other persons, such as the aristocratic Heinrich who treats him as a friend, Rose who loves him, the Count and the state bureaucracy of Gerolstein who fear him, all react to him in accordance with their own social status. He emerges as one of the new proletarians, identified with the masses in origin and sympathies, yet apart from them in intelligence and insight, a product of the injustices spawned by advancing industrialisation; in short, a virtual reincarnation of Weerth's Eduard. The major difference lies in Scherr's realisation, in the light of 1848, that such a creation was, to use his own description of Robert in one of the chapter titles, definitely 'Ein Charakter der Zukunft'.⁴²

In this descriptively named chapter, which analyses Robert's background, his success is attributed to a capacity

⁴¹Johannes Scherr, Eine deutsche Geschichte. Zürich, G. Kiesling, 1850, pp. 13-14.

⁴²Johannes Scherr, p. 57.

for independent thought, a quality considered by the author to be generally lacking in Europe and thereby responsible for its present ills. An equally important factor in his development has been the poverty of his family, and the resultant struggle for existence. Whereas poverty degrades the weaker members of the working class to the level of abject passivity described by Weerth and Prutz, the physically and mentally strong become hardened in their hostility towards the existing social order.⁴³ Robert is a such a person, the superman on whom rest the hopes of a disappointed revolutionary of 1848. His philosophical convictions are variously promoted by glimpses of the contrast between the aristocratic way of life and his own, his intellectual apprenticeship to an old shepherd who teaches him the importance of human dignity by means of the New Testament, and his technical apprenticeship to a tyrannical master locksmith who teaches him the reality of oppression. Then, having mastered his trade, he travels abroad like so many others of his kind and acquaints himself with socialist thought in France, Switzerland and England, eventually reaching the conclusion that only the abolition of the monarchy and the foundation of a democratic republic can guarantee social justice.⁴⁴

Back in Germany, he works hard at his trade and the philosophical enlightenment of his fellow workers, distracted only by his love for the aristocratic Rose.⁴⁵ This last affair gives an unlikely and sentimental twist to the plot, but it affords the opportunity for variations on the theme of incompatibility based on social station, to be found frequently in the literature of the nineteenth century.

Despite the lengthy introduction to the character of

43. Johannes Scherr, pp. 57-8.

44. Johannes Scherr, pp. 60-5.

45. Johannes Scherr, pp. 65-71.

Robert, he remains a remote and improbably perfect figure until the scene of his ^fconfrontation with the Count, a passage comparable to the Baron's meeting with the industrialist in Weerth's Fragment and just as successful an example of a pre-revolutionary clash. Because the characteristics of both the participants have been described in detail beforehand, their verbal duel, discussed in an earlier chapter from the viewpoint of the Count,⁴⁶ is already programmed to form the climax of the novel. Although the Count has an initial advantage as interrogator and social superior, Robert soon gains the upper hand by means of his direct answers, whose confidence proves disconcerting to his questioner. What Scherr describes ironically as "seine schwache Stunde"⁴⁷ - Robert's willingness to express his revolutionary convictions rather than maintain a prudent silence - becomes in fact his moment of triumph. On the basis of his travels in France, he predicts a third revolution in Paris, the foundation of a republic and the spread of similar fervour to Germany. Until this point Scherr has allowed his hero simply to predict the actual course of events but, on the subject of Revolution in Germany, makes him voice the aspirations of the 'Vormärz' socialists. He foresees a political and social revolution, in which the bourgeoisie and proletariat will form an initial alliance: "Das solide Bürgerthum will sich rächen und will die Stelle des Adels einnehmen. Das Bürgerthum wird der Revolution oder wenigstens den Anfang derselben seine als Oppositionsmänner berühmten Führer, das Volk wird ihr seine Masse und seine Arme leihen."⁴⁸ His prescription corresponds with the realities of the March days, but when the Count suggests that the bourgeoisie will soon withdraw from participation,

⁴⁶. See pp. 23-5 above.

⁴⁷. Johannes Scherr, p. 88.

⁴⁸. Johannes Scherr, p. 96.

Robert claims that the people will then carry on the Revolution themselves, as long as they possess suitable leaders. He seems to have won a moral victory, for the Count then offers him a position in the state service, while the arrival of news of revolution in Paris confirms his prophecy, at least partially.

When the Revolution comes to Gerolstein, Robert takes a leading rôle in events which resemble the confrontations outside the royal palace in Berlin on March 18-19,⁴⁹ and were repeated with variations in many of the German states. The news of the Paris Revolution inspires the liberal opposition to formulate a list of demands, including freedom of the press and the right of free assembly, while democratic elements insist on more far-reaching changes. Liberal leaders persuade the populace to trust them and to remain within the law, but royal rejection of their moderate demands brings the crowds onto the streets. Threatening multitudes gather before the palace, barricades are erected, soldiers confront citizens and await the signal, be it misunderstanding or deliberate provocation by one side or the other, for popular fury to be unleashed. As soon as the ruler faces danger to himself and his property, he seeks to restore calm by granting popular demands and thus achieving a respite, but leaderless elements of the crowd have already embarked on a pointless campaign of pillage and destruction.⁵⁰

Thus does Scherr describe the Revolution in Gerolstein, as authoritatively as one who had studied the same phenomenon occurring all over Germany. The aristocratic Heinrich aligns himself with the moderate liberals, while Robert arrives in time to lead the attack on the palace. His attention is dis-

49. These events are documented in detail by Tim Klein, pp. 153-6.

50. Johannes Scherr, pp. 120-34.

tracted when part of the crowd sets fire to the Count's mansion, he searches for Rose in the burning building and rescues her, but as they emerge, she is fatally wounded by a proletarian sniper, while Robert himself is seriously injured by a collapsing roof-beam. Thereafter the Gerolstein Revolution, deprived of that very element Robert had prescribed for its success, fails through lack of leaders.

The burning of the Count's mansion creates a new dimension in Scherr's portrayal of the proletariat. In one sense he merely reproduces a frequent phenomenon of 1848, when enraged crowds destroyed property and killed available scapegoats with little discrimination. Well-known examples were the murder of Prince Lichnowski in Frankfurt during September, the lynching and dismemberment of Count Lamberg in Budapest and the assassination of the Austrian war minister Latour in Vienna.⁵¹ Scherr's crowd, which is responsible for the death of his heroine, is described as "schadenfroh,"⁵² but he accords no further rebuke to the class to whom he still believes the future belongs. Instead he apportions some blame, albeit ironically, to Robert, who has allowed his fear for the fate of his beloved to conquer his desire for the continuation of the Revolution: "Ach, es ist ein großer Jammer, daß die Deutschen bei den besten Anläufen gewöhnlich über ihr Herz stolpern!"⁵³ Robert is fallible, whereas Weerth's Eduard seems not to be.

The second confrontation between Robert and an aristocrat, this time the new chief minister Heinrich, takes place in May

51. More conservative critics who could not excuse these proletarian crimes included Friedrich Hebbel, who wrote in February 1849 in Vienna: "Eher würde ich mich noch dem russischen Czaren anschließen, als der schaam- und sittenlosen Brutalität, die hier für die Trägerin der Freiheit galt." (Werke Vol. V. Munich, Carl Hanser, 1967, p. 676.)

52. Johannes Scherr, p. 131.

53. Johannes Scherr, p. 131.

1849, when the Reaction had already gained strength. Through his proletarian hero, Scherr castigates his favourite scapegoats, the liberals, who have betrayed the 'Märzerrungenschaften' by continuing to sanction absolutist monarchies. "Ihr habt weder die Kraft, gut, noch den Muth, schlecht zu sein," fulminates Robert in one of Scherr's strongest denunciations of liberalism, "und Alles, was eure Partei, ihr Herren Liberalen, in Deutschland seit Monaten gethan, ist nur eine stümperhafte Fortsetzung des Systems von Betrug und Niedertracht und Feigheit, welches euer Muster und Vorbild Louis Philippe achtzehn Jahre hindurch gehandhabt."⁵⁴ For a man who had confidently predicted to the father of his present listener that the Metternich system would soon be sweptaway in the aftermath of the imminent collapse of Louis Philippe's corrupt régime, and that social change would follow political change in Germany, his words constitute not only an accusation against the social class represented by Heinrich but also an admission of the failure of his own followers. So the man of the future leaves Gerolstein and in June 1849 he takes part in the last convulsion of the Revolution in Baden. There he is killed, in the classic moment of raising the German tricolor, as he murmurs: "Armes Vaterland! Armes Volk!"⁵⁵

In an epilogue, Scherr describes the reaction to his story when he related it to a group of acquaintances, each of whom judges it according to his or her own social station. A fat, cigar-smoking bourgeois sees in the story an example of the fruitless attempts by young people to change solid realities, a woman finds it a poetic expression of the fate of beautiful things, another attributes the unhappy ending

54. Johannes Scherr, p. 150.

55. Johannes Scherr, p. 156.

to inter-class romance, and another to the evils of revolution. A girl blames the whole catastrophe on an insufficiency of religion, an academic lays the responsibility on his students, while finally, a young woman simply sings a lament. In this sequence Scherr recaptures the confusion of verdicts given by survivors of the Revolution, none of whom, except perhaps the girl who reacts emotionally in a manner corresponding to the emotion of Robert's death, reaches the heart of the matter as expressed by Scherr at the beginning.⁵⁶

Eine deutsche Geschichte 1848-1849 remains true to its title, as a model of reality set in a fictional place peopled by fictional characters, yet a mirror of actual happenings. Sentimental and oversimplified, it nevertheless sketches the forces behind the Revolution with an immediacy consistent with the author's spatial, chronological and philosophical proximity to it. While Georg Weerth, fêted as the creator of Germany's first class-conscious proletarian, abandoned his novel in despair,⁵⁷ the forgotten Johannes Scherr portrayed a similar type without the benefits of an association with Marx or Engels, and proceeded to illustrate the inevitable defeat of a proletarian ahead of his time.

III

Robert Prutz and a vision of the past: 1851

"Geht linkwärts Ihr, uns lasset
rechtswärts geh'n!" Wilhelm Hackländer

In 1848, when Robert Prutz was a member of Berlin's Constitutional Club, he published a summary of his liberal philosophy in the group's newspaper, which he edited: "Ordnung

⁵⁶. See p. 59 above.

⁵⁷. "Meine schriftstellerische Tätigkeit ging entschieden mit der Neuen Rheinischen Zeitung zugrunde." (Weerth, Vol.V, p.403)

ohne Freiheit ist Despotie; Freiheit ohne Ordnung ist Anarchie; nichts ohne das Volk; nichts ohne den konstitutionellen König!"⁵⁸ Thus he placed himself in an ideological position considerably to the right of Weerth or Scherr. During the 'Vormärz' period he had been considered an "unerschrockener Kämpfer für Recht und Freiheit"⁵⁹ who was on friendly terms with Herwegh, associated with Ruge in the editing of the Young Hegelian Hallische Jahrbücher, forced by the Saxon government to leave the University of Halle, prevented from lecturing, and put on trial for his anti-royalist play Die politische Wochenstube. But his early withdrawal from even a moderate liberal stance in the Revolution, and the conservative tone of his later writings, indicate that 'Vormärz' manifestations of radicalism were not to provide the key to his later ideological or literary development.

At the outset of a discussion of Prutz's literary treatment of the proletariat, it is useful to contrast his statement "Nichts ohne das Volk" with his avowed fear of "Gewaltherrschaft des Pöbels (...) und Unwissenheit der Massen,"⁶⁰ presumably a view resultant from his experience of the March days in Berlin. Werner Spilker states the obvious when he comments: "Ihn [Prutz] (...) als Dichter des Proletariats zu bezeichnen, ist völlig abwegig."⁶¹ On the other hand, Prutz was one of the writers who made a personal assessment of the condition of the Silesian weavers after the uprising which, as we have seen, provided the impetus for much literary propaganda on behalf of the new industrial working class. As a

58. In: Werner Spilker, Robert Prutz als Zeitungswissenschaftler. Leipzig, Noske, 1937, p. 20.

59. Erich Adler in: Robert Prutz, Vol. III, 'Nachwort' p. 9.

60. Robert Prutz, Taschenbuch der neueren Geschichte. Dessau, Gebrüder Katz, 1851, p. 25.

61. Werner Spilker, p. 23.

result of this investigation, Prutz's evocation of the weavers' plight in Das Engelchen is unsurpassed.

In an early chapter entitled 'Das Fabrikdorf', Prutz introduces the weavers in a scene where their wages are paid to them. Strangely similar to the payday scene in Weerth's Fragment, this interlude surpasses the Fragment in its skilful use of a technique whereby only the voice of the factory official is heard, as he appraises, rebukes and terrorises the unfortunate weavers. A woman is dismissed when she apparently protests that her lateness has resulted from the care of a sick child, and an old man whose shaking fingers have caused spindle breakages is advised to die: "Nun für deine ungebührlichen Reden verdopple ich hiermit den Abzug - und übrigens rath' ich dir, mach', daß du stirbst, alter Narr."⁶² The functionary's callous disregard for human life is echoed by Weerth's Herr Preiss, who says to one of his weavers: "Was geht mich Eure Frau an? Wenn sie stirbt, dann seid Ihr sie los."⁶³ Moreover, just as Wolston's pay clerk extends his omnipotence to the attainment of sexual favours from his female workers: "Willst mir die Sache auseinandersetzen? (...) Sieh mal an. Auf meinem Zimmer? Morgen früh?"⁶⁴, so too does Preiss's accountant Herr Weber attend the pay-out ceremony in order to observe "was irgend an weiblich Erfreulichem vorhanden war."⁶⁵

Once the workers have received their wages, they make for the inn, where drink, card games and dice account for a large proportion of their earnings, and young girls offer themselves to passers-by outside. Prutz warns the reader directly

62. Robert Prutz, Das Engelchen Vol. I. Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1851, p. 123.

63. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 274-5.

64. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, p. 124.

65. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 228.

against condemning the workers for uncivilised behaviour, for the poorly paid and debilitating work they are forced to do has robbed them of "den letzten Rest von Menschenwürde, den letzten Funken menschlichen Bewußtseins,"⁶⁶ dragging them down into the despair which accompanies their realisation that exactly the same fate awaits their children. Their exultation in brief moments of primitive pleasure is thus explicable as a means of achieving oblivion to the facts of their existence. The conservative socialist August reaches an identical conclusion after watching the weavers receive their wages in Weerth's novel: "Mit Schaudern dachte er an die wüste Freude jener andern, die nach einer Woche voll Mühe und Qual den geringen Lohn in toller Bestialität zu vertilgen eilen" and, like Prutz, he ends with a suggestion of collective guilt: "Dazu haben wir die Menschen gebracht! Soweit haben wir sie entwürdigt."⁶⁷

Prutz, however, does not allow the social injustices he portrays and the questions he raises to dominate his elaborate plot structure of false wills, stolen plans, substituted children, smuggling, deception, fire and murder. The proletariat he creates diverges from the Silesian prototype in that no immediately obvious counterpart to Eduard or Moritz Jäger emerges to enlighten and encourage the anonymous, quiescent mass of weavers. There are three possible candidates for this position, as they are the only members of the proletarian group who are allowed to develop by the author, but ultimately none of them fulfils its requirements.

The mentally deranged reciter of Shakespeare, Heiner, who has been trained as a weaver but disdains factory labour,

66. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, p. 129.

67. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 235.

has been programmed to become an "Apostel des Aufruhrs"⁶⁸ in the unrest fomented by Lehfelddt. In the inn he is the centre of attention and, thanks to Lehfelddt's financial support, the most successful card player; a middle-class observer is moved to remark significantly: "Welche Stürme für die bürgerliche Gesellschaft müssen hervorgehen aus diesem Abgrund!"⁶⁹ But thereafter his rôle in the novel remains a minor one until he appears finally as the improbable leader of the crowd which attacks the 'Schloß'. Motivated by such diverse concerns as claiming the food abandoned by Wolston's guests, rescuing their children from the workers' crèche, punishing the industrialist for his recently revealed smuggling, and destroying the symbols of their oppression, the machines, the participants in this ridiculous affair, which is described by the 'Wirthin' whose premises are ransacked as "die vollkommene, leibhaftige Revolution,"⁷⁰ adopt Heiner as their leader. He waves a red flag and declaims "mit schrecklicher Stimme und lautem, wiehern-dem Hohngelächter, deutsch, englisch, lateinisch, Alles durcheinander."⁷¹ Arbitrary as it seems, the revolt re-echoes not only the destruction carried out by the Silesian weavers in 1844 but also isolated uprisings, described by Rudolf Stadelmann as "lokale Ausbrüche der Erbitterung gegen den wirtschaftlich Stärkeren,"⁷² during March and April of 1848. The peasants of Donaueschingen (March) and Waldenburg (April), and the factory workers of Solingen (March) registered violent dissatisfaction without constituting an organised social force. In the controlled confusion of the last stages of the novel, Prutz

68. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 469.

69. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, p. 218.

70. Robert Prutz, Vol. III, p. 416.

71. Robert Prutz, Vol. III, p. 417.

72. Rudolf Stadelmann, Soziale und politische Geschichte der Revolution von 1848. Munich, Münchner Verlag, 1948, p. 81.

is too concerned with the meting out of just deserts to a multiplicity of characters, once the revolt has been crushed and Heiner accidentally killed by Lehfeldt, to dwell on the social motivations of an action in which Heiner's importance as a popular leader has proved to be negligible.

The second possible proletarian representative, 'der rothe Konrad', similarly fails to develop beyond private hatreds and does not even participate in the eventual uprising. Hermann Schneider, in his analysis of Das Engelchen as a reflection of the Silesian weavers' revolt, believes Konrad to be the embodiment of Prutz's view of the masses, robbed of human dignity, without class consciousness and content to drink and gamble, to the detriment of their impoverished families.⁷³ There is no political significance in his title "Red" Konrad, unless Prutz, like many other moderates, had become affected by the "Red Ghost" which haunted the middle class after the riots of June 1848 in Paris, with the result that communism became synonymous with disorder and subversion, or simply with evil, a quality apparently inherent in one who murders a defenceless child for the sake of a few coins.⁷⁴

Only the scene which ends Volume I, when Konrad decides his pregnant wife must also work in the factory and they are reconciled while eating the bread which has been in the house since their wedding three years before, creates a situation in which he stands on the brink of insight into the nature of their poverty: "Kinder, mein Schatz, sind nur für Leute, die Geld haben, für unsereins ist es ein Unglück, ein recht bittres Unglück."⁷⁵ However, once accustomed to the prospect of bring-

73. Hermann Schneider, p. 270.

74. Robert Prutz, Vol. III, pp. 385-7.

75. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, p. 423.

ing a child into their world of deprivation, he suggests trust in God and personal toil within the existing social order as the only means of improving their condition: "Arbeiten will ich (...), daß mir das Blut aus den Nägeln spritzt. Ah, wir sind noch nicht so verloren, wie du denkst, wenn ich nur will, ich kann's schon."⁷⁶

The sentimentality of the last part of the scene, described as "eine wahre Geschichte (...) aus dem Volk,"⁷⁷ in which husband and wife share the only crust in the house, demonstrates the validity of Adler's criticism of Prutz, whose portrayal of the proletariat he characterises as a titillating experience for the middle-class reader situated comfortably on a plane of existence fortunately far removed from the events described.⁷⁸ Prutz pleads reluctance to recount the details of the story lest he offend the sensibilities of the reader, and declares condescendingly that the lack of refinement in events he narrates can be found only on these lowly levels of society.⁷⁹ A certain irony is detectable, but nonetheless his outside view of the proletariat, which he does not hesitate to describe occasionally as "Pöbel", differs markedly from Weerth's pre-revolutionary self-identification with it. Prutz could well have applied to himself the comment he made with regard to 'jungdeutsch' writers in his book on contemporary literature: "Alle schauderten sie innerlich zusammen vor der harten schwieligen Faust des Arbeiters, alle, so demokratisch sie auch taten, gehörten innerlich, nach Wünschen und Neigungen, zur Aristokratie."⁸⁰

76. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, p. 426.

77. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, p. 427.

78. Erich Adler in: Robert Prutz, Vol. III, 'Nachwort' p. 4.

79. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, pp. 427-8.

80. Robert Prutz, Die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart Vol. II. Leipzig, Voigt & Günther, 1859, p. 25.

The third and, to some extent, most unlikely candidate for the leadership of the industrial working class is none other than the conservative master weaver's nephew Reinhold, the most positively portrayed male character, the only person worthy of the novel's heroine, and the man on whom Prutz finally confers leadership of the weavers for what he considers to be a viable future. Heroically anachronistic, he and Meister Werner hold fast to the techniques of handcraft in the face of growing industrial production of inferior but cheaper and more popular fabrics. Meister Werner considers industrialisation to be the source of the villagers' physical and spiritual degeneration, and isolates himself from them, refusing to allow any of his family to work in the factory or even to associate with their contemporaries in the village.⁸¹

The fierce conservatism of Prutz's 'Handwerksmeister' had solid historical foundation. Since the wars of liberation and Germany's advancing industrialisation, the economic position of his social class had deteriorated as a result of freer trade and crumbling customs barriers, which allowed the inflow of cheap manufactured goods from England as well as circulation among the member states of the 'Zollverein'.⁸² As the guild system, based on a clear distinction between master and apprentice in all spheres of production, quickly crumbled, and masters unable to obtain apprentices were often forced to work alongside unskilled workers in factories, small traders who originally belonged to the lower middle or 'kleinbürgerlich' class sank against their will into a new industrial proletariat. In general, the apprentices tended to be more radical than the

81. Robert Prutz, Das Engelchen Vol. I. Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1851, p. 259.

82. A historical process sketched by Prutz, Vol. I, pp. 250-1.

masters, for whom modern developments constituted a source of silent humiliation. As Mommsen puts it: "Der alte, stolze deutsche Handwerksmeister, der einst im Zeitalter der Meistersinger die städtische Kultur verkörpert hatte, blickte jetzt fast ausschließlich rückwärts," and he adds: "Die Handwerkgesellen aber standen meist auf seiten der Radikalen. Die Turnvereine, deren radikale Teile eine Art halbuniformierte Kampftruppe für die Radikalen stellten, setzten sich ebenfalls weitgehend aus Kreisen des kleinen Mittelstandes zusammen."⁸³

Prutz is in a more favourable ideological position than either Weerth or Scherr for examining sympathetically the conservatism of a large proportion of the lower classes. Once the peasants of 1848 had achieved emancipation from feudal bonds they had no further interest in the Revolution; it is related that the peasant delegates to the 1848 Austrian 'Reichstag' left the assembly as soon as their demands were met.⁸⁴ Bavarian peasant representatives seriously suggested: "Wir wollen den Herrn König behalten, aber wir wollen auch die Republik haben," while submissions to the Austrian 'Reichstag' from outlying areas included frivolous demands such as freer export of Austrian wine to South Germany.⁸⁵ For their part, the 'Handwerker' pressed for the restoration of customs barriers and a return to the guild system; in March 1848, for instance, a meeting of weavers in Krefeld demanded that no 'Meister' be permitted to own more than four looms,⁸⁶ thus striking feebly at the heart of industrial production.

Although Reinhold mutely endorses the militant conservatism of his uncle, he appears at first to be advancing to a

83. Wilhelm Mommsen, p. 152.

84. Wilhelm Mommsen, p. 61.

85. Wilhelm Mommsen, pp. 125 & 152.

86. Rudolf Stadelmann, p. 11.

more progressive position, for he assiduously studies mathematics, makes calculations and builds models so similar to those designed by his inventive grandfather, whose stolen plans have been used as a blueprint by Wolston, that another breakthrough in the mechanics of textile production seems imminent.⁸⁷ The opposition of Meister Werner, who considers Reinhold's researches to be a product of education beyond their station in life, cannot dissuade him from a project which indicates to the perspicacious reader that Reinhold has recognised the importance of ever-improving mechanical techniques to the future of weaving. But, as on other occasions, Prutz does not allow a projected development of a radical nature to take its logical course, and the arbitrary destruction of Reinhold's notes and models by his mentally deranged grandfather is treated as a divine intervention to thwart his hopes for the future: "Es war ein Gottesgericht, ohne Zweifel, und die Vorsehung hatte den Blödsinn des Alten benutzt, ihm eine Lehre zu geben."⁸⁸

His essential quiescence emerges even more clearly in the climactic confrontation with Angelica, his beloved, but also a representative of the wealthy industrial class. Here Prutz evokes the humiliation of the craftsman whose poverty has placed him on a level with the factory proletariat. Reinhold laments "die Hand des Elends"⁸⁹ which has brought despair and suffering to their household, he describes the hopeless passivity of their existence as a kind of living death which is endured by hundreds and thousands in the same social class, and he claims to realise that it must be so: "...daß wir die unerläßlichen Opfer sind, sein müssen für die neue Zeit, die

87. Robert Prutz, Vol. I, pp. 334-5.

88. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 233.

89. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 187.

neue Weltordnung, die über unserem Lande emporsteigt."⁹⁰ 76.

Yet out of the despair born from a belief that change must come but that his own class could never enjoy the fruits of it, Reinhold finally rises to a position of power, conferred upon him by the consequences of the abortive revolt and, united with Angelica, he restores manual techniques of weaving to the region.⁹¹ This utopian conclusion, in which the problem of alcoholism, for instance, is supposedly solved by the closure of the inn, has been harshly judged by many critics; Adler describes it as "gedanklich und historisch widersinnig,"⁹² Fritz Martini as "realhistorisch schon zu spät,"⁹³ and Schneider as "eine antihistorische Illusion."⁹⁴ Unless we can explain the facile historical impossibility of Prutz's solution on other grounds, these are indeed valid reactions.

The conclusion brings to fruition the aspirations of many 'Handwerker' who had clamoured in 1848 for the restoration of former production structures, and thus it corresponds in a sense to Weerth's novel, which plotted a course leading towards the goal, equally unattainable in the 1840s, of proletarian dominance in industry. Just as Weerth spoke for those who looked to the future for an improvement in social conditions, so Prutz spoke for others who looked to the past. The conservative solutions offered by many of the 656 entries in a competition held by King Max of Bavaria in 1849 in order to seek the best means of relieving the working classes' material distress,⁹⁵ indicated that Prutz was far from alone in believing

90. Robert Prutz, Vol. II, p. 193.

91. Robert Prutz, Vol. III, p. 460.

92. Erich Adler in: Robert Prutz, Vol. III, 'Nachwort' p. 27.

93. Fritz Martini, Deutsche Literatur im bürgerlichen Realismus 1848-1898. Stuttgart, Metzler, 1962, p. 420.

94. Hermann Schneider, p. 271.

95. Karl Obermann, p. 180.

that the rejuvenation of an idealised 'kleinbürgerlich' way of life would allow the proletariat to rejoin the middle class. Thus Reinhold, an anachronistic craftsman turned bourgeois, symbolises the post-revolutionary belief that prosperity and social harmony lay in the abolition, not of capitalism, but of the proletariat itself.

Conclusions to Part I

From the preceding analysis, several major points are worthy of emphasis. Within the limits imposed by a personal ideological stance, each of the three novelists documents the age with an accuracy which reference to historical and statistical accounts, both contemporary and recent, can only confirm. Jürgen Kuczynski, a social analyst of considerable thoroughness, refers to Prutz's description of the weavers as evidence of the financial penalties imposed by industrial employers, and disputes the view of some critics who believe that scenes from literature are "unersetzlich zur Illustrierung, jedoch muß deutlich gemacht werden, daß es sich nicht um echte Quellen handelt," to which Kuczynski rejoins: "Dazu möchte ich sagen, daß ein zeitgenössischer Roman eine echtere Quelle als eine politökonomische Abhandlung sein kann."¹ As Kuczynski is presumably aware, Prutz firmly based his description on two personal tours of investigation, while the uncanny similarity of Weerth's treatment of the weavers suggests that he too was familiar with events in the Erzgebirge. As for Scherr, the very date of his novel demonstrates the authority with which he was able to sketch the progress of the Revolution.

The three novels under consideration advance beyond the realm of accurate historical documentation because of their 'Tendenz', or what has been described hitherto as their ideological stance. Against the contemporary backdrop of a society held in close check by the Metternich system, it fell to the writers of the 'Vormärz' period to put their craft to the service of popular enlightenment and proselytism. Florian Vaßen writes: "Erst in den 40er Jahren verliert die Literatur ihre

1. Jürgen Kuczynski, p. 248.

Ersatzfunktion und wird zur unersetzlichen Stütze der Politik."² Any serious treatment of German literature of the 'Vormärz' therefore presupposes a rejection of the myth of pure art and its corollary, a disdain for tendentious writing. Georg Lukács, who finds the ideal of unpolitical literature to be a reactionary invention, makes the following claim: "Jeder Schriftsteller politisiert, indem er schreibt, und nimmt deshalb Partei. Die Frage ist nur, mit welcher Bewußtheit."³ Using this wide definition, one may infer that all literature is political, and the variation only one of degree. Weerth, Scherr and Prutz, as products of the polemical 'Vormärz' period, occupy overt ideological positions, accentuated by the nature of their subject matter: the interaction of contemporary classes during a period of impending or actual revolutionary turmoil. Weerth and Scherr are openly partisan in their dramatisation of social injustices whose nature would scarcely permit even a neutral observer to retain his impartiality. Prutz, whose experience of the Revolution causes him to shift his ground perceptibly to the right, nevertheless draws from his study of the weavers' situation a social indictment similar to Weerth's, while the defiantly anti-historical victory accorded to the reactionary forces represented by the passive craftsman Werner is deliberately manipulated, to the detriment of the infinitely more influential manufacturer. The fact that Weerth and Prutz draw eventually opposing solutions, projected or realised, from sources so similar that entire scenes are virtually duplicated, provides a clear indication, reassuring for the researcher who uses contemporary fiction to document social trends, that a

2. Florian Vaßen, p. 33.

3. Georg Lukács, 'Marxismus und Stalinismus. Politische Aufsätze'. In: Lukács, Ausgewählte Schriften IV. Reinbeck bei Hamburg, Luchterhand, 1970, p. 77.

didactic purpose on the part of the author does not necessarily entail the distortion of historical material.

A further major factor essential to the works we have examined lies in their literary formation. Weerth, Scherr and Prutz did indeed voice the political concerns of their time, but they were not professional politicians, but writers, and just as important as the political background of the Age of Metternich was their literary heritage, which included not only 'Jungdeutschland' but also that arbiter of German literature's direction in the first thirty years of the century, the Romantic movement. Although we are not vitally concerned with it in this work, brief attention to one of its most famous survivors will help to explain what might be called the sentimental ornamentation encountered frequently in the novels under consideration. Heinrich Heine, who believed his Atta Troll constituted the epilogue of Romanticism, who was indirectly associated with 'Jungdeutschland', and whose satirical epic Deutschland: ein Wintermärchen is considered by some critics to be an ideological preparation for 1848,⁴ was treated as a literary ideal by many younger writers. Weerth, who visited him several times in Paris, described him as the writer "den ich unter allen neuern Autoren am meisten ehre und liebe,"⁵ Scherr referred to him as "der genialste der Ironiker,"⁶ and even the more conservative Prutz admitted: "Unserer geistigen Entwicklung hat er den Stempel seines Genius aufgedrückt."⁷ On the basis of these comments, one might profitably apply to the three novelists

4. e.g. Georg Lukács, 'Heine und die ideologische Vorbereitung der 48er Revolution'. In: Text und Kritik. Zeitschrift für Literatur Heft 18/19. Munich, Richard Boorberg, 1971.

5. Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 383.

6. Johannes Scherr, Von 48 bis 51 Vol. II(1). Leipzig, Wigand, 1868, p. 112.

7. Robert Prutz, Neue Schriften. Halle, G. Schwetschke'scher Verlag, 1854, p. 354.

a most perceptive statement made by Heine shortly after the Revolution, when he characterised his and his contemporaries' relationship with Romanticism:

"Trotz meiner exterminatorischen Feldzüge gegen die Romantik, blieb ich doch selbst immer ein Romantiker, und ich war es in einem höheren Grade, als ich es selbst ahnte. Nachdem ich dem Sinn für romantische Poesie in Deutschland die tödlichsten Schläge beigebracht, beschlich mich selbst wieder eine unendliche Sehnsucht nach der blauen Blume im Traumlande der Romantik, und ich ergriff die bezauberte Laute und sang ein Lied, worin ich mich allen holdseligen Übertreibungen, aller Mondscheintrunkenheit, allem blühenden Nachtigallen-Wahnsinn der einst so geliebten Weise hingab."⁸

A continuing influence of Romanticism on Weerth, Scherr and Prutz would help to explain otherwise dissonant features in their sociological novels: Prutz's escape into the distant past, Weerth's strange sympathy for an individual heroic aristocrat surrounded by luxuriant Nature in his overgrown domain, and Scherr's sentimental portrayal of the proletarian hero who lies dying beneath a rose bush, presses his lips to a flower, murmurs the name of his beloved and is lamented by a solitary nightingale. The literary ornamentation or, at worst, distortion of the goals of the three novels can, in the light of Heine's words, be considered an excrescence of the Romantic legacy.

Finally, the all-pervasive influence of the Revolution has been emphasised throughout. Weerth's novel of social anticipation, Scherr's dramatised sketch of the frustration resultant from actual involvement, and Prutz's sober colossus conceived in a period dominated by the political Reaction and a general acceptance of old solutions, all converge in spirit on a year of abortive turmoil, whose political rather than social aspect will be examined in terms of a more immediate literary form in Part II, the section dealing with satire.

8. Heinrich Heine, 'Geständnisse'. In: Heine, Sämtliche Werke Vol. VI. Ed. Dr Ernst Elster. Leipzig & Vienna, Bibliographisches Institut, n.d., p. 19.

PART II
SATIRE OF THE REVOLUTION,
ILLUSTRATED IN WORKS BY
ROBERT PRUTZ, GEORG WEERTH, AND ADOLF GLASBRENNER.

Many commentators have attempted to define the specialised literary genre of satire, and the results have been diverse. Dryden's lengthy but inconclusive Essay on Satire draws on the example of the Roman satirist Horace and quotes a definition which describes it as "a kind of poetry (...) in which human vices, ignorance and errors (...) are severely reprehended" and characterises the means of achieving this goal as "a civil way of jesting, by which either hatred or laughter or indignation is moved."¹ The extent to which the condemnation of faults is positive or destructive is a moot point. "Lampoon is the poisoner or the gunman. Satire is the physician or the policeman," writes Gilbert Highet,² while Gilbert Cannan points out: "Your satirist must be as single-minded and devoted in his research as a scientist. Like the medical student he spends his life in the discovery of diseases. The cure he leaves to others."³ From a moral point of view Helmut Arntzen says of satire: "Sie spricht gegen diese Zeit, damit sie richtiggestellt werde. Satire ist Utopie ex negativo,"⁴ and Leonard Feinberg notes: "Satire is as didactic as any other kind of writing. Its art is the delivery of a moral judgment and its objective is not to degrade man but to show him how he has degraded himself."⁵ The potential for exaggeration in satirical criticism of contemporary reality is emphasised by C. Lénient: "Elle n'a

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1. John Dryden, Of dramatic poesy and other critical essays Vol. II. London, Dent, 1964, p. 143.
 2. Gilbert Highet, The anatomy of satire. Princeton New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1962, p. 26.
 3. Gilbert Cannan, Satire. London, Martin Secker, n.d., p. 25.
 4. Helmut Arntzen, 'Nachricht von der Satire'. In: Gegen-Zeitung. Deutsche Satire des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts. Ed. Arntzen. Heidelberg, Wolfgang Rothe, 1964, p. 17.
 5. Leonard Feinberg, The satirist, his temperament, motivation and influence. Iowa, State University Press, 1963, p. 23.

point de ces ménagements calculés dont les partis s'enveloppent pour dissimuler leurs fautes; elle ose tout, dit tout, et même quelquefois plus que la vérité,"⁶ while Feinberg defines satire as "a playfully critical distortion of the familiar."⁷

Because the satirist draws his inspiration essentially from contemporary reality, which then provides his principal target, the political orientation of satirical writing, as the pages of London's Punch and Berlin's Kladderadatsch indicate quite clearly, has always been strong. The debased nature of political reality brings into play the utopian morality of the satirical critic who, directly or by implication, contrasts politics as they exist with an unattainable ideal. In a period of political turmoil, the critical rôle of satire is intensified. "Satire is reckoned the easiest of all wit," wrote Jonathan Swift, its greatest English practitioner, "but I take it to be otherwise in very bad times."⁸ For such times tend to spawn an abundance of satirists whose abilities seldom match the complexity of their sources, and events of a serious or disastrous nature force them onto a difficult path between utter despondency and tastelessness.

The preceding general remarks apply directly to the satirical writing which looked forward to or was inspired by 1848. The virtually universal goal of those who took up a satirical pen during the 'Vormärz' was the undermining, by wit, ridicule or hostility, of the régimes controlled by petty princes and an administrative aristocracy whose power had been confirmed by the post-Napoleonic Restoration. These men, in

6. C. Lénient, La satire en France au Moyen Age, quoted by Raymond M. Alden, The rise of formal satire in England. Philadelphia, Archon Books, 1962, p. 42.

7. Leonard Feinberg, p. 7.

8. Jonathan Swift, A proposal for correcting the English tongue. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1957, p. 243.

a minor way, were the 'philosophes' of the German Revolution, for although they have been forgotten individually, the direct influence of their newspaper articles, weekly magazines, pamphlets, dramas and manifestos must not be under-estimated. "If the final causes of the Revolution were economic ones," notes Eda Sagarra, "the long-term cause was the political disaffection of the educated,"⁹ and Agatha Ramm states that in the movements leading to 1848, "the common denominator was one of ideas."¹⁰ When freedom of the press was proclaimed during the March days, the flood of such writing became a torrent, and Johannes Scherr remarked sarcastically: "Es regnete Zeitungen, schneite Flugblätter und hagelte Karikaturen. Unendliche Redenkatarakte drohten, die ganze Welt unter Wasser zu bringen."¹¹

But as the absolutist régimes recovered from their paralysis in late 1848, the political Reaction silenced once more the voices which had been raised during the Revolution, and satire disappeared completely in the turmoil of what Swift would no doubt have called "very bad times." Those who, in a literary sense, survived the Reaction and continued to write in a non-satirical vein often looked back on their productions during what came to be known as "das tolle Jahr" with a mixture of regret and disdain, as we shall see in Part III of this work. Their task had, admittedly, been a difficult one: identification and analysis of the satirical target, constant reassessment of the power of 'Vormärz' absolutism, a wary eye on the censor, a sense of restraint when all restrictions suddenly disappeared, and the ability to find an honourable

9. Eda Sagarra, Tradition and Revolution. German literature and society 1830-1890. London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971, p. 165.

10. Agatha Ramm, Germany 1789-1919. A political history. London, Methuen, 1967, p. 172.

11. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 425.

compromise with reasserted princely power. For the most part, these were qualities beyond the experience of minor writers who suddenly discovered that satire was not the easiest of all wit. For those whose literary endeavours had been directed towards the art of witty pinpricks against the body politic of absolutism and could not readily be diverted into the more neutral fields of historical drama or novel-writing, 1848 marked not only the apogee but also the end of their achievement.

In the following chapters, attention will be given to a writer whose literary career, founded on satire, was shaped by the Revolution. Adolf Glaßbrenner lived for much of his life in Berlin, where he produced a continuing stream of pamphlets, newspapers and articles over a period of several decades. His achievement lay in his creation of recognisable social types who recur constantly in his sketches and narratives as they are borne up and down on the tide of contemporary political events. It is possible to follow the careers of some of these characters through the 1840s and thus measure the impact of the Revolution in a more immediate way than in the static structure of a novel.

As an ideological, chronological and stylistic balance to Glaßbrenner, we shall also examine Robert Prutz's Politische Wochenstube¹² as an example of the 'Vormärz' dramatic genre of pre-revolutionary satirical comedies. Next, we shall consider the satirical writings of Georg Weerth, specifically Humoristische Skizzen aus dem deutschen Handelsleben,¹³ which was composed before and during the Revolution and thus mirrors

12. Robert Prutz, 'Die politische Wochenstube'. In: Der deutsche Michel. Revolutionskomödien der Achtundvierziger. Ed. Horst Denkler. Stuttgart, Reclam, 1971, pp. 71-169.

13. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 347-485.

the ideological development of the author, and also his semi-biographical, picaresque satire on the German aristocracy, Leben und Taten des berühmten Ritters Schnapphahnski,¹⁴ which, according to Bruno Kaiser, accords Weerth a place "mit den größten Meistern unserer satirischen Literatur."¹⁵

14. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, pp. 285-489.

15. Bruno Kaiser, in: Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, 'Vorwort', p. 7.

Chapter One : Satires against Absolutism and the Nobility

I

Robert Prutz and pre-revolutionary drama

"Das Theater, die Literatur, die Kunst müssen(...) den 'ideologischen Überbau' für die effektiven realen Umschichtungen in der Lebensweise unserer Zeit schaffen." Bertolt Brecht

In 1826 August von Platen wrote: "Nur ein freies Volk ist würdig eines Aristophanes,"¹ and in 1845 Adolf Stahr commented more hopefully: "Steht nur erst unser ganzes Leben auf der (...) Stufe der Freiheit, so wird ihm auch der deutsche Aristophanes nicht fehlen."² During the post-romantic era of aridity in the field of German drama, before the rescue operation effected predominantly in the 1850s by Friedrich Hebbel, there was a frequently expressed desire for a successor to the dramatic genius of Grecian antiquity, a modern Aristophanes who, by means of the familiar devices of allegory, political comment and anonymous choruses, could transform the theatrical medium into the kind of anti-absolutist political weapon required by the writers of the 'Vormärz'. For these men, Aristophanes, the writer who recaptured the turmoil of the age of the Peloponnesian Wars, epitomised a successful classical blend of literature and politics, but their own attempts to revive the drama of antiquity entailed a tension between an ancient form and the subject matter of a contemporary revolutionary period, with the result that one element was likely to dominate, to the detriment of the other.

The hitherto forgotten and largely inaccessible genre

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1. August von Platen, Sämtliche Werke Vol. III. Ed. Karl Goedeke. Stuttgart, Cotta, n.d., p. 267.
 2. Adolf Stahr, 'Kleine Schriften zur Kritik der Literatur und Kunst'. In: Oldenburgische Theaterschau Vol. I. Oldenburg, 1845, p. 234.

of 'Vormärz' revolutionary comedies has been given new prominence in an edition compiled by Horst Denkler,³ who has also published several articles providing theoretical background and analysis. In one of these he pinpoints the importance of the year 1848 to the comedies under consideration and thereby the reason for their inclusion in this present work: "Die bedeutsamsten Stücke (...) sind unmittelbar mit der Revolution von 1848 verknüpft und spiegeln von Text zu Text mehr den Übergang von Reflexion und tendenziösem Spiel zu revolutionärer Tatgesinnung und den schließlichen Verfall des revolutionären Aktionstheaters zu tatferner Buchdramatik."⁴ The process described by Denkler indicates a direct parallel with the social trends elicited in the preceding pages; in other words, the chronological proximity of a given political work to the Revolution will partially determine its degree of militancy. Furthermore, Denkler suggests that the aristophanic form becomes increasingly subordinated to the revolutionary theorising which deprives the works of dramatic qualities. None of these plays was ever produced, not merely because of their radical content but because they were undramatic, not in the sense of twentieth century epic theatre but as a result of their authors' concentration on the communication and resolution of a problem, to the virtual exclusion of the technical essentials of a stage play. Such works emanated from a militant view of post-romantic literature's application to contemporary life, as articulated, among others, by Ludolf Wienbarg who asserted: "Die Schriftstellerei ist der Geist der Zeit, der (...) ergreift des Schriftstellers Hand und schreibt im Buch

3. See note 12, p. 86 above.

4. Horst Denkler, 'Aufbruch der Aristophaniden. Die aristophanische Komödie als Modell für das politische Lustspiel im deutschen Vormärz'. In: Der Dichter und seine Zeit. Politik im Spiegel der Literatur. Ed. Wolfgang Paulsen. Heidelberg, Lothar Stiehm, 1970, p. 142.

des Lebens."⁵ Adherence to a philosophy of virtual literary automatism explains the general 'Vormärz' difficulty with, or lack of attention to, problems of form, and motivates a further generalisation by Denkler: "Rückblickend zeigt sich allerdings, daß die wertvollsten und zugleich aufschlußreichsten Dramen immer dann entstehen, wenn sich die Autoren dem Formzerfall widersetzen."⁶ He names Robert Prutz as one who succeeded in this regard.

Die politische Wochenstube, written in 1845, stems from Prutz's more radical period, and, in Denkler's words, "lenkt (...) unmittelbar zum Drama der Revolution hin."⁷ While his post-revolutionary novel Das Engelchen aspires to an anachronistic social utopia, the 'Vormärz' Wochenstube, conversely, looks forward to an era of political liberation. The fact that in 1845 Prutz's radicalism was considered so dangerous that he was refused University appointments in Saxony and was put on trial charged with 'Majestätsbeleidigung' when Die politische Wochenstube appeared in print, indicates clearly, by contrast with the innocuous tenor of Das Engelchen, the magnitude of the change wrought in one man's attitudes by the events of 1848. But our principal concern in the present chapter is to establish how his play summed up 'Vormärz' opposition to absolutism, how it pointed the way to the Revolution and then to compare it with a similar work written during 1848 itself: Die Wände by Otto Seemann and Albert Dulk.⁸

Both plays treat, within an aristophanic form, various

5. Ludolf Wienbarg, Ästhetische Feldzüge. Hamburg, Hoffmann & Campe, 1834, p. 186.

6. Horst Denkler, 'Revolutionäre Dramaturgie und revolutionäres Drama in Vormärz und Märzrevolution'. In: Gestaltungsgeschichte und Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Ed. Helmut Kreuzer. Stuttgart, Metzler, 1969, p. 313.

7. Horst Denkler, p. 323.

8. Otto Seemann & Albert Dulk, 'Die Wände'. In: Der deutsche Michel. Stuttgart, Reclam, 1971, pp. 172-208.

aspects of the main political problem of the 1840s, unity and freedom, and both express indirectly the hope that the impending or actual Revolution will provide a solution. 'Einheit und Freiheit' was the principal slogan of 'Vormärz' liberal spokesmen, and the issue which the Frankfurt Parliament sought unsuccessfully to resolve. In general it would be true to say that the creation of a unified German 'Reich' was a goal of more conservative elements, while political liberation from absolutism was considered a greater priority by the radicals, and moderate voices tried to combine the two. Unity and/or freedom thus occupied the minds of many writers during the 'Vormärz' and the Revolution. We shall look briefly at several background views to the aspirations expressed dramatically by Prutz, Seemann and Dulk as they occur in the theoretical writings of Theodor Fontane and Heinrich Laube, and in the poems of Heinrich Heine and Franz Dingelstedt, all of whom illuminate from differing angles the political problems discussed in contemporary satirical dramas.

Fontane reports in his autobiography that his radical views in 1848 led him to participate in the defence of the Berlin barricades until he was filled with a sense of the futility of his actions.⁹ Yet his words several months later on the subject of unity and freedom still demonstrate a determinedly radical attitude towards the problem.¹⁰ The early success of the Frankfurt Parliament in appointing a 'Reichsverweser' as a first step towards a unified German government had been turned into a shameful reversal when the majority of members endorsed the peace terms adopted at Malmö, whereby

9. Theodor Fontane, Aus den Erinnerungsbüchern. Stuttgart, Reclam, 1970, p. 47.

10. Theodor Fontane, Sämtliche Werke Vol. XIX. Ed. Charlotte Jolles. Munich, Nymphenburger Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969, p. 50.

Prussia conceded Schleswig-Holstein to the Danes. Fontane views this first act of a provisionally united government as a demonstration of the poverty of a philosophy which imposes unity without first granting freedom to the people. "Unsere Einheit ohne das ganze Maß der Freiheit ist ein Unding; sie bleibt ein unlösliches Problem. (...) Kein Streben nach Einheit; sie muß sich geben wie die Liebe," he claims. "Aller Zwang ist ihr Tod."¹¹ Therefore he argues that an imposed constitution cannot survive: "Ein Volk läßt sich keine Verfassung von außen her aufzwingen. Es hält fest am Alten, auch gegen bessere Überzeugung, aber es nimmt kein Neues an gegen Wunsch und Willen."¹²

Conversely, the older and more conservative Laube, who was himself an inconspicuous member of the National Assembly and described its operations in detail in his book Das erste deutsche Parlament, championed the cause of unity above all, with all the enthusiasm of an old 'Burschenschaftler' for the black, red and gold tricolor. To this end, popular liberation must take second place: "Die breite Grundlage ist nicht nur eine gesunde Freiheit. Nicht nur. Denn diese gesunde Freiheit ist nur um einen Preis zu haben, und dieser Preis heißt: Ein deutsches Reich."¹³ Laube welcomes King Friedrich Wilhelm's declaration of March 19: "Preußen geht fortan in Deutschland auf," although, as a literary survivor of the 'Jungdeutschland' movement and the era of the Karlsbad Decrees, he finds the upheaval of 1848 confusing: "Der mächtigste deutsche Staat trat mit einem Male an die Spitze derjenigen Forderungen, welche bisher mit sechs Jahren Festung gezüchtigt worden waren."¹⁴

¹¹Theodor Fontane, p. 52.

¹²Theodor Fontane, p. 50.

¹³Heinrich Laube, Das erste deutsche Parlament Vol. II. Leipzig, Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung, 1849, p. 313.

¹⁴Heinrich Laube, Ausgewählte Werke in zehn Bänden Vol. IX. Ed. Heinrich Hubert Houben. Leipzig, Max Hesse, n.d. p.380.

The fact that the collapse of absolutism in early 1848 led to temporary freedom, but not to any lasting form of unity, fills the old liberal with despair: "Erst wird das Bedürfnis der Freiheit übertrieben bis zum Thörichten und dann wird das Bedürfnis des Vaterlandes verleugnet wie eine überlebte Laune."¹⁵

In his series of poems written during 1848, Franz Dingelstedt mirrors the changing attitudes of the radicals towards the problem of unity and freedom. Momentarily deceived by the apparent forward progress represented by Archduke Johann, he appeals to the new leader, in a poem entitled 'Dem Herzog Reichsverweser', to lead the German nation "an der Zukunft gold'ne Ziele,"¹⁶ but as the Frankfurt Parliament becomes increasingly entangled in problems of its own making, he begins to mock it. "Kennst du das Land, wo Einheits-Phrasen blüh'n?"¹⁷ he asks in 'Fresken aus der Paulskirche', and by August he has completely lost faith in the Archduke's ability to achieve either unity or freedom: "Bleibe, Johann ohne Land, nur ein Johann ohne Hand!"¹⁸

As an outsider in Paris, Heinrich Heine never allowed himself to be swayed by the revolutionary fervour of the March days. Already in 1844; in his Deutschland: ein Wintermärchen, he cynically dismisses the proponents of a new German 'Reich' as anachronistic adherents of Friedrich Barbarossa.¹⁹ In his later poem 'Michel nach dem März' he admits to a certain admiration for the German people's unusual readiness to champion the cause of freedom, but the introduction of German unity as

15. Heinrich Laube, Das erste deutsche Parlament Vol. II. Leipzig, Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung, 1849, p. 464.

16. Franz Dingelstedt, Nacht und Morgen. Neue Zeit: Gedichte. Stuttgart & Tübingen, Cotta, 1851, p. 103.

17. Franz Dingelstedt, p. 125.

18. Franz Dingelstedt, p. 128.

19. Heinrich Heine, Vol. II, pp. 431-94.

an additional goal fills him with pessimism:

"Doch als die schwarz-rot-goldne Fahn,
Der altgermanische Plunder,
Auf's Neu erschien, da schwand mein Wahn
Und die süßen Märchenwunder."²⁰

He blames ex-'Burschenschaftler', reactionaries and clerics for diverting popular energies away from the destruction of absolutism towards a specious ideal of unity:

"Die Burschenschaftler allesamt
Aus meinen Jünglingsjahren,
Die für den Kaiser sich entflammt
Wenn sie betrunken waren."²¹

The preceding examples illustrate the importance accorded by writers of the 1840s to the problem of unity and freedom, and the variety of solutions offered. Robert Prutz, writing in 1845, still enjoyed the optimism of the 'Vormärz' without the insight which accompanied the Revolution, and so his Politische Wochenstube emerges as a good-humoured satirical attack on every aspect of the superstructure of pre-revolutionary absolutism, whose symbolic defeat in the last scene of the play looks forward not only to a violent revolution but also to an uncomplicated solution to the problem of unity and freedom.

In its attempt to mock satirically a whole range of 'Vormärz' manifestations of political backwardness, Die politische Wochenstube embraces so many allegorical figures and motifs that it tends to lose sight of a unifying thread, for its wit and political mockery take precedence over logical organisation of material. Act I introduces the Doctor, a cynical observer and commentator on political events, who presides over the allegorically gynaecological institution of the drama's title. In urging his assistant Kilian, presumably a representative of the Common Man, to allow his stomach to be removed as a

20. Heinrich Heine, Vol. II, p. 187.

21. Heinrich Heine, Vol. II, p. 188.

solution to the purely physical problems of continuing one's existence, he indicts by name those 'Vormärz' contemporaries who, by compromising with absolutism, have ensured for themselves a steady income but have betrayed their liberal ideals:

Auf wessen Geheiß, o sage mir, nahm Freiligrath
Die Schmach auf sich der königlichen Pension?
Um welchen Preis brandmarken läßt sich Dingelstedt?
Der Magen immer, immer ist's der Magen nur,
Der unsers Herzens allerckühnste Pläne bricht."²²

Prutz has exaggerated to an absurd degree the basic 'Suppenfrage', the extent to which moral qualities are determined by physical needs. "Freiheitsbedürfnis" is satirically equated by Prutz with "Freßbedürfnis", with the result, according to the cynical Doctor, that universal stomach excision could solve the moral dilemmas of men like Freiligrath, and lead to political harmony.

Kilian, however, having refused such a drastic solution, proceeds to search the Doctor's office for the wages due to him, and discovers a series of objects kept by the Doctor as symbols of political Reaction.²³ He finds a collection of pig-tails or queues, the standard hairstyle in the Prussia of Frederick the Great and now a symbol of political backwardness, and then a preserved collection of the "worms" which supposedly infested the brain of the conservative anti-Young Hegelian philosopher Göschel. This allusion is the first of many such satirical references to contemporaries of greater or lesser obscurity, whose significance must be explained to the modern reader. Prutz, who was associated with Arnold Ruge in the editing of the Young Hegelian Hallische Jahrbücher, has moved from an attack on Prussian governmental conservatism to its

22. Robert Prutz, p. 75. For an explanation of the reference to Dingelstedt, see note 2, p. 10 above.

23. Robert Prutz, pp. 76-82.

chief philosophical support, the right-wing Old Hegelians, whose philosophy in its simplest form interpreted Hegel's famous dictum: "Was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig und was vernünftig ist, ist wirklich" as a sanctification of all existing institutions, because their present existence constituted proof of their rationality and, consequently, their necessity. The importance of Old Hegelian support to the defences of absolutism is pointed out by William J. Brazill in his book on Hegelianism: "The Christian religion was an established religion, and in Prussia it was part of the state. To attack the established state religion was to attack the state; to criticize Christianity was to criticize the foundation and function of the state."²⁴ For the conservative Hegelians, "Christianity and the Hegelian philosophy were not only compatible but mutually satisfying,"²⁵ but the Young Hegelians' school interpreted the master's dictum basically as an encouragement to demand constant change in order to achieve the rationality lacking in current institutions, and questioned the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. Therefore it was considered by the 'Vormärz' régimes to be a threat to their existence.

As a direct contrast to the Old Hegelian relics, the Doctor includes in his political laboratory a dangerous substance called "Communistenpulver," whose effects he counteracts by means of a dose of "Begeisterungsextract," a concoction devised in the anti-Napoleonic, sentimentally nationalistic fervour of 1813. Kilian, unimpressed, voices the basic concern of the Common Man:

"Es ist ja nichts, was einen Menschen nährt, darin,"²⁶

24. William J. Brazill, The Young Hegelians. New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1970, p. 6.

25. William J. Brazill, p. 50.

26. Robert Prutz, p. 81.

but before departing, still hungry, he adopts the attitude of resignation characteristic of that stock figure of German philistinism, 'der deutsche Michel':

"Bin ich denn ein Deutscher nicht?
Verhungern werd' ich, aber doch geduldig sein."²⁷

Having prepared the political background, Prutz now changes the direction of Act I by introducing the clever opportunist Schlaukopf as the Doctor's second visitor, and with him the motif of German unity. Disguised as a beggar and relapsing periodically into the language of the medieval Nibelungen-lied, Schlaukopf claims to be collecting funds for the construction of the 'Hermannsdenkmal', a pompous memorial to Pan-Germanism, to be erected near Detmold. The pretence maintained by Schlaukopf reflects the hollow superficiality of the cause he professes to espouse, and the Doctor, speaking as the author's principal satirical mouthpiece, dismisses the proposed statue as a false representation of German unity, to which he refuses to contribute either money or metal.²⁸

Prutz then adjusts the emphasis back to the initial motif when Schlaukopf reveals his identity as a royal agent and the Doctor immediately declares his readiness to recant all previous anti-authoritarian sentiments so long as he is granted the financial means to satisfy his hunger. He thereby applies to himself the theory he propounded at the beginning of the Act, and Schlaukopf accepts this political 'volte-face' as commonplace:

"Glaublich ist's,
Denn mit den meisten Liberalen ist es so:
Gesinnung ist 'ne Wasserpflanze meistentheils,
Die aus des Herzens Felsengrunde nicht, o nein,
Nur aus dem Sumpf der Redensarten sich erhebt."²⁹

²⁷.Robert Prutz, p. 82.

²⁸.Robert Prutz, p. 89.

²⁹.Robert Prutz, p. 94.

This cynical view of the constancy of liberalism proved, in the aftermath of 1848, to be a prophetic one, and directly applicable to the formerly radical Prutz himself. Schlaukopf then announces that Germania, another personification of German unity, is pregnant, and that the Doctor has been chosen to supervise the birth of a new age as "Deutschzukunftsentsbindungscommissarius."³⁰ She arrives, drawn by a team of horses representing the provincial parliaments and accompanied by a choir of slaves, the German people, who are used only to push her carriage out of the mud but express the hope that the new age about to be born will release their bonds.³¹

The beginning of Act II indicates that despite the plethora of satirical motifs introduced so far, Prutz has maintained a degree of structural unity, for Kilian, once again the first character to appear, continues to voice the Common Man's lament of insufficient nourishment, and vows to commit himself to the prosperous Germania if she can still his hunger.³² Schlaukopf and the Doctor take the opportunity of ridiculing the stereotyped characteristics of the German states as revealed in the box of gifts destined for Germania's offspring.³³ From Prussia come symbols of oppression cleverly disguised as baby requisites, Bavaria's gifts smell of incense and beer, and Austria demonstrates a pro-Jesuit sympathy, while the most magnificent gift represents another somewhat specious, and at that time appropriately unfinished, symbol of German unity, a model of the Cologne Cathedral.

Prutz then alters the direction of the play once more, as Schlaukopf and the Doctor discuss the problem of substitut-

30. Robert Prutz, p. 101.

31. Robert Prutz, p. 106.

32. Robert Prutz, pp. 113-15.

33. Robert Prutz, pp. 117-21.

ing another child if Germania's confinement should result in a miscarriage. They summon a pair of supposedly pregnant women who are introduced as the heroines of ancient Greek drama, Medea and Antigone.³⁴ This seemingly unlikely twist to the plot is partially an attempt to link the content more closely with the aristophanic form and also a satirical barb directed at Ludwig Tieck, the old Romantic and, in the eyes of Prutz's generation, arch-reactionary, who produced the dramas Medea and Antigone for the royal Court of Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1841 and 1843. Despite the "indecent assault" the two women have suffered at the hands of German producers, they are not pregnant and they walk out of the play, to be succeeded immediately by a philosopher and a romanticist, personifications of Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, Hegel's conservative successor at the University of Berlin, and Ludwig Tieck himself. For the Young Hegelian and 'Vormärzler' Prutz, these two men, symbolic of compromise with absolutism, were anathema. His satirical attack on them is indicative of the polarisation of intellectuals in the pre-revolutionary period. Tieck had been especially unpopular with the younger generation of writers since the publication of his 'Novellen', Eigensinn und Laune and Der Wassermensch: the latter presents a caricature of a young radical who makes ridiculous demands such as the playing of the 'Marseillaise' at every concert, the printing of July in red on calendars to remind people that history began with the 1830 July Revolution in Paris, and the publication of words like 'Fürst', 'Graf' and 'König' in lower-case letters.³⁵ Prutz's reincarnation of Tieck recalls the cynical attitude displayed

34. Robert Prutz, p. 126.

35. Ludwig Tieck, 'Der Wassermensch'. In: Schriften Vol. XXI. Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1853, pp. 3-62.

in the 'Novelle':

"Wann sprach ich Gutes von moderner Poesie?
Wann zeigt' ich Liebe für das reifende Geschlecht
Und werf' nicht um mich mit Verdächtigung und Spott?"³⁶

On realising that the Doctor cannot restore his lost youth, Tieck leaves abruptly. As the ultimate gynaecological absurdity, the philosopher then claims to be pregnant, with a new system of philosophy. But the investigation carried out by the Doctor, in an increasingly ridiculous process of discovery similar to Kilian's study of the laboratory specimens in Act I and the examination of the gifts in the early part of Act II, reveals only lumps of ill-digested or misunderstood philosophy of the past. Hegel, Fichte, Kant, Spinoza, Böhme and Görres - all are represented, together with various philosophical controversies of Schelling's own life. Finally the philosopher, whom Prutz and the other Young Hegelians considered to be an academic charlatan as well as a servant of Prussian absolutism, decides he is not pregnant and escapes just as Germania re-enters with Schlaukopf. Thus the second Act ends on the same note of doubtful German unification as did the first.

Having dismissed the representatives of the old absolutist order and the proponents of anachronistic Pan-Germanism, Prutz resolves the hitherto implicit problem of 'Einheit und Freiheit' in Act III by means of a 'deus ex machina' and the literal explosion of previous pretence. Suddenly a newly-arrived female stranger claims to be the real Germania. Thin, undernourished, haggard and persecuted by absolutism, she speaks for the choir of slaves who represent the People.³⁷ There ensues a confrontation between the rival Germanias, a personified battle between the radical ideal of Prutz and the

³⁶.Robert Prutz, p. 132.

³⁷.Robert Prutz, pp. 159-61.

oppressive reality of the 'Vormärz'. 'Germania I articulates the essential attitudes of one who accepts absolutist rule - obedience to every command from above, passivity in the face of oppression and humble respect for the clergy - while the stranger calls to her defence the choir of slaves whose hands, however, remain bound. At the moment when the progressive forces seem about to be defeated by the 'gendarmes' representing the forces of reaction, Germania I suddenly "explodes". In a kind of premonition of a successful revolution, which would destroy absolutism and build a united Germany on the basis of individual liberty, the crowds of absolutist representatives who materialise from the ruins of false Germania - monks, knights, cossacks and the Chinese Emperor - deliver speeches appropriate to their reactionary natures and then disappear, leaving the joyful slaves to acclaim the true Germania, who promises them full emancipation in due course. They are left to wait in hope:

"Freundlicher Bote zukünftiger Zeit!
O erschein', o erschein' uns, wir flehen dich an,
Dein wartet in Thränen, dein wartet die Welt:
O erscheine dem hoffenden Volke!"³⁸

In his analysis of Die politische Wochenstube, Denkler describes it as Prutz's best play; in spite of "aller pathetischen und rhetorischen Übersteigerungen,"³⁹ it lays bare the evils of the age. Admittedly Prutz performs this function with great thoroughness, but the multiplicity of his satirical scapegoats transforms it into the dramatic equivalent of the nineteenth century 'Schlüsselroman', and most of the references to contemporary persons or events must be explained to the modern reader. In his edition of 'Vormärz' comedies, Denkler requires

38. Robert Prutz, p. 169.

39. Horst Denkler, in: Robert Prutz, p. 444.

twenty-five pages to carry out the latter task, whereas Die Wände (1848), a play on a similar topic, calls for only two pages of such elucidation.⁴⁰ Seemann and Dulk's play, written in the light of experience of the early days of 1848, utilises the allegorical aristophanic form in a much more economical fashion, omitting detailed attacks on various manifestations of absolutism and concentrating on the liberation of Hans Volk, the embodiment of the manipulated Common Man. Whereas Prutz treats the problem of 'Einheit und Freiheit' primarily in an analytical juxtaposition of true and false concepts, Seemann and Dulk deal with the achievement of popular liberty by means of a stylised revolution.

Hans Volk is kept in a state of suspended animation by two doctors, Censur and Polisäi. He is encouraged to sleep, advised against thinking, and forbidden to speak. Any subversive ideas he may entertain are written down by him and then erased by Doctor Censur.⁴¹ In his 'Vormärz' ignorance, Volk remains content, despite the urgings of Aufrecht, a character representing radical intellectuals. The wise chorus of walls, from whom the play takes its title, ascribe Volk's aversion for political change to a long familiarisation process:

"Doch der Gewohnheit Netz ist nicht zu zerreißen,
Durch den Sitz des innersten Lebens schlägt sie
Zahllos Fäden, jede Bewegung hemmend,
Immer sich stärkend."⁴²

Like Prutz's patient chorus of slaves, who heave the absolutist Germania's carriage out of the mud, Hans Volk has learnt to accept and even enjoy the life of solitude and passivity imposed by his oppressors, and so the importance of the

40. Seemann & Dulk, pp. 471-3.

41. Seemann & Dulk, pp. 177-8.

42. Seemann & Dulk, pp. 185-6.

propagandist writer's rôle is underlined. Eventually Aufrecht's efforts are rewarded, and Volk, losing patience with Censur's continual injunctions to write down his opinions rather than to articulate them, seizes his oppressors - Gensdarm, Kriechel, Polisèi and Censur - and throws them off the stage. Like Kilian in Prutz's play, he then seeks an immediate solution to the basic 'Suppenfrage', demanding that Aufrecht find him sustenance.

In an apparent warning against the kind of indiscriminate excess often committed by a revolutionary mob, Seemann and Dulk portray a liberated Volk, carried away by his own novel sense of power, turning against his own benefactor Aufrecht.⁴³ The choir of walls points out the moral, that the unaccustomed freedom which accompanies a successful revolution must be utilised with responsibility:

"Aber des Menschen, des Erdbherrschenden Recht und Freiheit ist die Vernunft!
Blinde Vergeltung nicht ziemt ihm, noch maßlos Wüthen,
- Ruhe! noch in der Leidenschaft Stürmen Ruhe."⁴⁴

Finally, when Volk has been reconciled with Aufrecht, and the lackeys of absolutism ignominiously despatched to Russia, the authors offer a solution to the actual Revolution in the form of an alliance between the monarchy, represented by the character Theodor, and the populace. In Theodor's blithe promise: "Für Herrn Volk und durch Herrn Volk!"⁴⁵ Seemann and Dulk find a simplistic answer as yet unclouded by the approaching Reaction, which was to prove the transience of such assurances. In short, although Die Wände is a more unified and compact work, akin to the twentieth century 'Lehrstück', Prutz exhibits a greater degree of appreciation, even from his van-

43. Seemann & Dulk, pp. 199-200.

44. Seemann & Dulk, p. 203.

45. Seemann & Dulk, p. 207.

tage point three years before the Revolution, of the political forces involved in the removal of absolutism.

Helmut Arntzen, writing on the rôle of satire, comments: "Sie spricht gegen diese Zeit, damit sie richtiggestellt werde. Satire ist Utopie ex negativo."⁴⁶ Out of a wide range of satirical attacks, Prutz has produced his own utopian answer - a contrived dissolution of absolutist power, followed by the emergence of a new Germania to bring hope of liberation to the Common Man. Seemann and Dulk place their trust in the even more nebulous ideal of a monarchy genuinely responsible to the people. Horst Denkler's ironic verdict on Die Wände could apply equally to Prutz and others who, in dramatic form, castigated absolutism and looked forward to political change: "Diese aristophanische Komödie [hätte] zum volkstümlichen Festspiel der deutschen Revolution aufwachsen können: die Geschichte wollte es anders und ließ den Text zum Zeugnis schrumpfen, daß Revolutionen in Deutschland nur auf dem Papiere ganz gelingen."⁴⁷ Their failure and resultant obscurity recalls once more the words of Dean Swift, who considered satire the easiest of all wit, "but I take it to be otherwise in very bad times."⁴⁸

II

Georg Weerth and personal satire

"Difficile est satiram
non scribere." Juvenal

A satirical work devoted to the failings of one specific person tends to be destructive, for it rarely offers a solution. Because, in the words of Florian Vaßen, it contains "die

46. Helmut Arntzen, p. 17.

47. Horst Denkler, 'Aufbruch der Aristophaniden'. In: Der Dichter und seine Zeit. Politik im Spiegel der Weltliteratur. Ed. Wolfgang Paulsen. Heidelberg, Lothar Stiehm, 1970, pp. 150-1.

48. Jonathan Swift, p. 243.

illusionszerstörende, aggressive Negativität, die nicht versöhnend wirkt,"⁴⁹ it has not been a popular form in Germany. Its subject is generally political, for the characteristics of the victim under consideration must be sufficiently well-known to the reader for the satirical portrayal to be readily appreciated. Such works approach the category of lampoon, described by Highet as "the poisoner or the gunman," in contrast to the more positive rôle of satire as "the physician or the policeman."⁵⁰ The difference lies within the satirist's intention, either to subject his victim to ridicule without ulterior motives, or to correct the faults of persons as well as social structures. Cannan inclines to the view that even a personal satire can be directed to a positive end: "It is when affectation has grown in upon man's vitals that satire has been forged and sharpened to cut it out,"⁵¹ but the twentieth-century satirist Karl Kraus states simply: "Ich schimpfe nicht, ich verstümmle."⁵²

During the March days of 1848, the abolition of the regulations requiring all publications of less than twenty pages to be submitted to the censor, and the general liberation of the press, led to the appearance of many personal political satires, for which the events of the Revolution, the emergence of new public personalities and the ritual played out by the Frankfurt Parliament provided abundant scope. The best-known satirical portrait of the activities of the Assembly, whose proclamation of solemn decrees without any authority of a bureaucratic or military nature to execute them contained inherently comic aspects, was the apocryphal figure of Piepmeyer.

49. Florian Vaßen, pp. 96-7.

50. Gilbert Highet, p. 26.

51. Gilbert Cannan, p. 63.

52. Karl Kraus, quoted by Helmut Arntzen, p. 14.

Described by Heinrich Laube as a "gesinnungslosen Gesinnungs-
helden, den Sklaven der Freiheit, den Wicht der Popularität,
den Lump der stolzen Phrase,"⁵³ he represents the delegate
who is presumably devoid of any strong convictions and there-
fore follows the prevailing political fashion. "Wer nicht
Kraft hatte, unpopulär zu werden, der piepmeyerte."⁵⁴

For the conservative Laube, Piepmeyer was a convincing
and contemptible portrayal of an opportunistic left-winger.
Just as contemptible to the more radical faction was the opp-
ortunistic type of right-winger personified by Fürst Felix
Lichnowski, a delegate to the Prussian 'Landtag' of 1847 and
a member of the extreme rightist faction in the National Ass-
sembly of 1848. Virtually a prototype of the arrogant Prussian
'Junker', he had spent his early life in a series of dubious
adventures, details of which reached the hands of Karl Marx,
editor of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung in 1848 and early 1849.
The 'feuilleton' of this newspaper, described predictably by
Bruno Kaiser as "die weitaus beste Zeitung (...), die es je
in Deutschland gegeben hat,"⁵⁵ was written by Georg Weerth,
who used the material on Lichnowski as the basis of his satire
Leben und Taten des berühmten Ritters Schnapphahnski, printed
as a series of instalments in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung
between August 1848 and January 1849, and the only work by
Weerth to appear in book form during his lifetime.

Of Lichnowski, the politically conservative Allgemeine
Deutsche Biographie of 1883 states: "Es konnte nicht aus-
bleiben, daß Fürst Lichnowski durch die öffentliche Gering-
schätzung der radikalen Partei zum Gegenstande des persönlichen

53. Heinrich Laube, Vol. II, p. 104.

54. Heinrich Laube, Vol. II, p. 114.

55. Bruno Kaiser, in: Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, 'Vorwort', p. 5.

Hasses auf seiten der letzteren wurde, welche sich geschürt durch die Artikel der radikalen Blätter und durch zahlreiche Abbildungen auch den untersten Volksschichten mitteilte."⁵⁶

Thus the characteristics of Lichnowski were well-known to the public, partly as a result of his own flamboyantly conservative style and partly as a result of the many left-wing attacks on him, while his death at the hands of the enraged citizens of Frankfurt in September 1848 accorded him the status of a martyr in the eyes of the conservatives. The execution of the radical delegate Robert Blum in Vienna had a similar effect on men of the left wing. For Weerth and his ideological comrades, Lichnowski epitomised the reactionary threat to the success of the Revolution, and his 'feuilleton' novel, in tracing the past history of the prince, attempts to expose the faults of a counter-revolutionary leader.

But Schnapphahnski is more than a political lampoon. Although it deals with one man, it can also be interpreted, in the opinion of Dietrich Allert, as an attack on the first German parliament and its unworthy popular representatives.⁵⁷ This interpretation is open to question on the grounds that Weerth omits from his novel any direct analysis of Lichnowski's life as a parliamentarian in Frankfurt but, as we shall see, it may be valid on a less superficial level. Weerth himself claimed in a letter to his mother "daß unter dem Schnapphahnski nicht ausschließlich dieser oder jener Mensch, sondern die ganze Kategorie der preußischen Krautjunker zu verstehen sei. (...) Ich schilderte eine ganze Klasse der Gesellschaft."⁵⁸

The degree to which Weerth was able to advance beyond specific personal vilification towards the universality of a whole social

^{56.} Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1883, p. 534.

^{57.} Dietrich Allert, p. 325.

^{58.} Georg Weerth, Vol. V, pp. 306-7.

class is a question which has been treated by several commentators, but none has reached so dogmatic a conclusion as the judges in Cologne, who sentenced Weerth in mid-1849 to three months' imprisonment for libelling the dead prince.⁵⁹

Weerth's satirical style has been analysed in a dissertation by Wolfgang Böttger,⁶⁰ who draws a distinction between satirical narrative, in which the rôle of the author is kept to a minimum, and satirical commentary, in which he may reflect personally on events, disguise his opinions in the words of another character, or include textual criticism in the form of quotation from hostile sources. Both Böttger and Dietger Pforte⁶¹ agree, in their analyses of Weerth's style, that these categories tend to overlap, but Pforte makes the dubious claim that Schnapphahnski is an example of satirical narrative. As we shall see, Weerth enters the novel personally as 'Ich-Erzähler' in virtually every chapter, addressing the reader directly and commenting on the events described. Therefore Schnapphahnski too, if we are to attempt categorisation of a satirical style so mobile that it militates against such fine distinctions, may be classified as satirical commentary. One of Pforte's subsequent comments is more accurate: "Sein satirisches Kommentieren setzt voraus, daß die Leser im Prinzip auf der gleichen Position wie der Autor stehen, also auf der des revolutionären Proletariats, zumindest aber (...) sich gegenüber ihrer Umwelt kritisch verhalten."⁶² Although the multiplicity of foreign words, references to works of

59. See Bruno Kaiser in: Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 12. Also Karl Weerth, pp. 57-60.

60. Wolfgang Böttger, Die Herausbildung des satirischen Stils in den Prosawerken Georg Weerths. Diss., Leipzig, 1962.

61. Dietger Pforte, 'Kritik als Kopf der Leidenschaft. Zu Georg Weerths Feuilletonistik'. In: Weerth, Blödsinn deutscher Zeitungen und anderes. Steinbach, Anabas, 1970, p. 117.

62. Dietger Pforte, p. 117.

literature and Greek mythology indicate that Weerth's aristocratic satire was not intended for a proletarian audience, he does expect a degree of philosophical like-mindedness on the part of the presumably middle-class audience. As Vaßen puts it: "Dem liberalen Bürgertum sollte mit diesem Roman angesichts der drohenden Konterrevolution die Augen geöffnet werden."⁶³

The work contains qualities of elusiveness which make analysis difficult. As Vaßen complains: "Eine detaillierte Interpretation des Romans stößt, soll sie nicht ins Uferlose ausarten, wie zuweilen das Werk selbst, auf methodische Schwierigkeiten. Wie sein großes Vorbild Heinrich Heine, so verliert sich auch Weerth mit seiner Phantasie in immer neuen Assoziationen. Ein witziger Einfall jagt den anderen."⁶⁴ However, the methodological difficulty can be traced not only to the stylistic phantasmagoria composed by Weerth, but also to the structure of the work. Like many of Dickens's novels, whose structural defects stem from their origins as a series of weekly instalments, the picaresque nature of Schnapphahnski involves a perceptible lack of unity. Furthermore, in preparing the series for publication as a book, Weerth was concerned to demonstrate the truth of his assertion to the legal authorities that his satire had not been directed at Lichnowski specifically,⁶⁵ and so he added two extra chapters as a diversion from the main theme. Consequently the novel comprises three sections so tenuously related that they could be described as three separate narratives loosely bundled together for the

63. Florian Vaßen, p. 98.

64. Florian Vaßen, p. 100.

65. See Weerth's letter to his mother: "Zufällig haben mich die Zentralgewalt und die Gerichte zu dieser Rechtfertigung gezwungen. Der 'Schnapphahnski', wie er in der 'N.Rh.Ztg.' erschien, würde sonst längst vergessen sein. Vielleicht haben mich die Gerichte dazu gezwungen, ein gutes Buch zu schreiben!" (Vol. V, p. 307)

sake of convenience. All three, however, stem from Weerth's experience of the Revolution, which was in progress during their composition, and therefore, despite their disparity in relation to one another, they are all valuable to an understanding of the author's attitude towards 1848.

Chapters I-XII constitute the first section, and follow closely the events of Lichnowski's life as detailed in the sources available to the Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Chapters XIII-XX, written after the murder of Lichnowski, change the emphasis from one nobleman to a whole range of representatives from the aristocratic class, while the final two chapters abandon Schnapphahnski-Lichnowski altogether and examine one of the principal events of 1848, the opening of the newly completed Cologne Cathedral.

The first and longest section was initially inspired by Weerth's literary master Heinrich Heine, who coined the pseudonym for Lichnowski which Weerth later adopted, and refers to him in the first Caput of Atta Troll in the course of an account of the conservative Don Carlos's attempt to seize the Spanish throne: "Herr Schnapphahnski wurde Autor."⁶⁶ Weerth also acknowledges a debt to Cervantes, whose portrayal of an anachronistic aristocrat at odds with a modern world in a series of picaresque situations bears obvious resemblances to the travels and adventures of Schnapphahnski. At first the majority of Schnapphahnski's adventures are of an erotic nature, which affords Weerth the opportunity for succinct observations on one of his favourite subjects, while simultaneously condemning the perfidy with which the degenerate aristocrat inevitably abandons his female conquests. This novel, and the

66. Heinrich Heine, Vol. II, p. 356. Source acknowledged by Weerth in Chapter I, Vol. IV, p. 298.

first part of it especially, provides abundant evidence of the validity of Engels's verdict on Weerth, written many years after the latter's death: "Worin Weerth Meister war, worin er Heine übertraf (weil er gesunder und unverfälschter war) und in deutscher Sprache nur von Goethe übertroffen wird, das ist der Ausdruck natürlicher, robuster Sinnlichkeit und Fleischeslust."⁶⁷ Schnapphahnski, of course, never embodies such natural robustness, but echoes of it can be found in the frequent authorial digressions. During Schnapphahnski's second affair in Berlin, Weerth digresses to sing the praises of legs, and the Belgian interlude provokes a discourse on the relative merits of female beauties from various European countries.⁶⁸ On the occasion of Schnapphahnski's ill-fated sojourn in Vienna, Weerth warns against incurring the wrath of the female sex,⁶⁹ and when Schnapphahnski flees to a North Sea island to find temporary safety in marriage, his chronicler praises love above nature: "Was geht mich die ganze Schweiz an, wenn ich in ein paar schöne Augen sehe?"⁷⁰

The irony of Weerth's attitude towards Schnapphahnski ("mit seinem Helden soll der Autor fühlen und empfinden"⁷¹) and his amusement or even feigned approbation of the prince's amorous pursuits dissolve completely on the few occasions that Weerth allows his disgust for Schnapphahnski to emerge: "Hole der Teufel die Flaneure und die westindischen Pflanzler!" he exclaims in the chapter detailing the life of indolence led by Schnapphahnski in Berlin. "Die Proletarier werden einst die erstern und die Sklaven die letzteren totschiagen. Ja,

67. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Vol. XXI, p. 8.

68. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, pp. 321 & 342-3.

69. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, pp. 366-7.

70. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 381.

71. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 358.

tut es! Es ist mir ganz recht - aber nur einen verschont mir: den Ritter Schnapphahnski."⁷² Occasionally he apologises to the reader for the indelicacy of the situations he describes.⁷³ In these asides he resembles Robert Prutz, who makes similar disclaimers for the working class in Das Engelchen. Because Weerth looks forward to a more just future while Prutz, in his novel at least, glorifies the past, it is logical that Weerth should regard the aristocracy on high with the same disdain shown by Prutz for the proletariat below. In both cases, the authors assume an attitude of philosophical sympathy on the part of the reader.

Virtually the only similarity between the sympathetically portrayed nobleman in the Fragment eines Romans, Baron d'Eyncourt, and the Silesian prince Schnapphahnski lies in their constant financial embarrassment. The Baron turns without success to an industrialist, while Schnapphahnski prostitutes himself to a duchess who gratefully supplies sufficient funds to liquidate the mortgages on the family estates. His visit to the estate before its debts have been paid, and his imaginary conversation with the sheep and rams provides Weerth with an opportunity to satirise in advance Lichnowski's later career as a parliamentarian. Like his poetic master Heine, who visualised the Frankfurt Parliament as an assembly of braying, brainless, servile donkeys,⁷⁴ Weerth treats the sheep, a species traditionally equally stupid, as the Frankfurt audience for Schnapphahnski-Lichnowski's inflated eloquence. One of Weerth's most successful satires, it abounds

72. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 313.

73. e.g. "Ich komme im Laufe meiner Erzählung zum ersten Male an eine Stelle, wo ich unwillkürlich stutze und zurückschreke." (Vol. IV, p. 391)

74. Heinrich Heine, Vol. II, pp. 196-8.

with clever untranslatable word plays:

"In O. in Schlesien setzte ich dem Grafen S. ein Paar Hörner auf (hier unterbrach den Redner das freudige Geblök sämtlicher Böcke)."

"Ja, mit euch habe ich mich entwickelt, ihr herrlichen Böcke, und nie werde ich vergessen, daß ich von euch alle meine tollen Sprünge lernte, bis ich endlich zu einem großen Sündenbock gedieh."

"Mit euch, ihr Schafe und Böcke, will ich schaffen und wirken für alle Schafe und Böcke."⁷⁵

Weerth's cynical attitude towards the work of the 'Paulskirche' and the intellectual qualities of its members was, of course, shared by the editor of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, who described it in Revolution und Konterrevolution in Deutschland as "eine Körperschaft, so abnorm, so lächerlich schon durch die Stellung, die sie annahm, und dabei so erfüllt von ihrer eigenen Wichtigkeit, daß die Geschichte höchstwahrscheinlich nie ein Gegenstück dazu liefern wird,"⁷⁶ and in the following paragraph he brands it "eine Versammlung alter Weiber."⁷⁷ True, the edicts issued by the delegates without the power to put them into effect, their internal squabbles, their humiliation in the Schleswig-Holstein affair and the eventual dismissal of the Rump in Stuttgart added up to a ridiculous fiasco, but there were many voices disagreeing with Marx and Weerth, not only moderate deputies such as Laube, but later conservative historians. Rudolf Stadelmann observes sympathetically: "Die Tragödie des deutschen Idealismus, der den Weg von der Vorstellung zur Wirklichkeit sucht und nicht finden kann, ist damals in einem besonders anschaulichen, ans Herz greifenden Akte gespielt worden,"⁷⁸ while Theodor Heuss, writing as first President of the German Federal Republic one hundred years after the Revolution, and a distinguished apologist for the

75. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, pp. 376-8.

76. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Vol. VIII, p. 45.

77. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Vol. VIII, p. 46.

78. Rudolf Stadelmann, p. 137.

'Paulskirche', also comments favourably: "Sicher hat nie mehr eine deutsche Volksvertretung (...) so viele durch geistige Leistung hervorragende Männer besessen. Das bleibt der Ruhm der Paulskirche, und es ist kein schlechter Ruhm."⁷⁹ The essence of the clash between apologists for the Frankfurt Parliament and those who denigrate it lies in their evaluation of the fact that it deflected the power of revolution, demonstrated so forcefully in the March days, towards a doomed ideal of reform and compromise with the existing régimes. Weerth and others of similar ideological convictions could perceive the fruitlessness of the process, and the novel Schnapphahnski, as Allert suggests, questions not only the character of a dissolute aristocrat but also, by association, the credentials of the counter-revolutionary assembly which made Lichnowski's name a household word.

After eleven mainly self-contained chapters describing Schnapphahnski's search for pleasure, money and respectability in a variety of locations throughout Europe, he embarks on an adventure which will guarantee him the second and third requirements, if not the first, and will provide the basis for his political career in 1847 and 1848. The account of his conquest of the wealthy, elderly Herzogin von Sagan coincided chronologically with the murder in Frankfurt of Schnapphahnski's prototype Lichnowski, and so from now on, although the change is not immediately apparent, Weerth gives greater emphasis to other aristocrats and less attention to the activities of the individual knight errant. In the first section, by contrast, he digresses from the mainstream of the Schnapphahnski story only once, for the purpose of elucidating an episode in Bruss-

79. Theodor Heuss, 1848. Werk und Erbe. Stuttgart, Curt E. Schwab, 1948, p. 79.

els. In the second section of the novel, however, such digressory interludes are not only commonplace, but a part of the thematic structure.

In the thirteenth chapter, Schnapphahnski is actually mentioned only twice, as a link in a marginally relevant story concerning a Berlin professor whose method of finding a wife⁸⁰ resembles Schnapphahnski's situation to some degree but it must primarily be designed to avert accusations of tastelessness in attacking a man recently murdered. The following chapter shows a similar concern, in that it describes Schnapphahnski's preparations for meeting the Duchess without at first mentioning him by name, and concentrates equally on the decadent Count of the chapter's title, who assists with the intrigue. In Chapter XV, the focus moves to another aristocrat, a Baron, whose rustic simplicity, clumsy strength and interest in agriculture bear resemblances to Weerth's other Baron in the Fragment. Weerth demonstrates once more a subtlety of perception which goes beyond simple stereotype of the aristocracy as a degenerate class: "Diesen robusten schafzüchtenden und schnapsbrennenden Edelmann finden wir als bestes Pendant zu seinem Wirte, dem in Bädern und großen Städten frühzeitig zerrütteten und entnervten Grafen."⁸¹ These extended descriptions of other aristocrats, although they detract from the unity of the narrative plotted in the first half of the novel, give the author greater credit for an ability to recognise and differentiate between members of a social class with which he was neither familiar nor sympathetic.

However, Weerth's digressions are now no longer restricted to portraits of individual noblemen, but embrace an abund-

80. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, pp. 400-8.

81. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 420.

ance of largely unrelated subjects, all of which allow him an opportunity for amusing observations on the joys of kissing a lady's hand, the problems of following the truth, the legend of Sleeping Beauty, the superior entertainment value of Greek mythology by contrast with Christian religious instruction, and so on. His imagination is given full rein. The Duchess herself, who has given Schnapphahnski his present security, remains a shadowy figure apart from the initially graphic portrayal of her physical features. She it is who urges him to embark on a political career, and he becomes a member of the Prussian 'Landtag' of 1847. The second part of the novel ends abruptly as he contemplates the image he will project during the career which will take him to the 'Paulskirche'. "Nun, was wurde er denn?"⁸² asks Weerth rhetorically, expecting, according to Vaßen, the answer: "Er wurde ein Volksverräter."⁸³ Be that as it may, the fact that Weerth does not impose an answer, but leaves the reader to make his own decision on Schnapphahnski's activities in Frankfurt not only diverts attention from the fate of Lichnowski but prevents the work from becoming heavily didactic.

The two final chapters constitute what might be termed Part III of the novel, as they represent a complete break with the preceding narrative. Schnapphahnski is mentioned only twice before the afterthought on the last page. Because Weerth added these two extra chapters while revising the book for publication, after having received intimation that the legal authorities had instituted proceedings against him on grounds of libel, one may assume that the change of theme was intended at least partly to camouflage his initially overt attacks on

82. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 456.

83. Florian Vaßen, p. 107.

Lichnowski. However, in the context of the novel as a whole, this seemingly irrelevant section does have a place in that it relates the character of Schnapphahnski, albeit indirectly, to the Revolution itself. As a member of the extreme right wing in Frankfurt, the aristocratic Lichnowski epitomised the reactionary threat to the Revolution's success, so that Weerth's juxtaposition of Schnapphahnski's career up until 1848 with a description of the solemn opening of the Cologne Cathedral bears a significance beyond the need to placate the public prosecutors. For Weerth, the pomp associated with the Cathedral, considered by many to be a concrete symbol of German unity, was hollow and detrimental to the real needs of the German people as seen by the radicals of 1848. The black-red-gold 'Schwärmerei', castigated by Heine as a remnant of intoxicated 'Burschenschaft' enthusiasm and so prevalent during the festivities, is detailed minutely by Weerth. In his description he concentrates on minor aspects which he exaggerates to a ridiculous degree - the weather, the Rhinelanders' love of festivals, the physical features of Archduke Johann and the menu at the ensuing banquet. As Vaßen points out: "Er will primär nicht Informationen über die Feierlichkeiten liefern, sondern an einigen Aspekten des Festes die politische Situation analysieren."⁸⁴ In fact, political analysis takes second place to satirical reportage, which makes observations and usually leaves the reader to draw the appropriate conclusion. Occasionally, however, Weerth enters more deeply into the significance of the scenes he describes; the unprepossessing appearance of the Archduke leads him to speculate on his own reasons for expecting a powerful man seven feet tall,⁸⁵ and

84. Florian Vaßen, p. 107.

85. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, pp. 460-1.

he thereby deflates, on a physical level at least, the myth that the man appointed by the Frankfurt Parliament to the post of 'Reichsverweser' would be of sufficient stature to achieve the German unity he supposedly represented. Later, the cutting of a cake reminds Weerth forcibly of the unjust division of Poland perpetuated by the European powers, and his anger causes him spontaneously to shout: "Es lebe die Republik!"⁸⁶

In the last two paragraphs of the novel, written in early 1849 when the power of the Reaction had been forcefully demonstrated, Weerth's ironic tone changes abruptly to one of grim recrimination. Abandoning his mock posture of reverence towards the Cathedral dedication festivities, he now describes them as "die große kölnische Domfarce,"⁸⁷ which duped the population into naive enthusiasm while its royal organisers planned the counter-revolutionary measures which led to the occupation of Vienna, the execution of the radical leader Robert Blum, the imposition of constitutions in Prussia and Austria, and the break-up of the Frankfurt Parliament. The outcome of 1848, with its trail of dead bodies and broken promises, causes Weerth's laughter at the ridiculousness of the Cathedral opening ceremony to be suddenly stifled. "Doch genug," he concludes. "Der Humor ist versiegt; das Buch ist zu Ende."⁸⁸ like Swift, he has discovered that in very bad times, satire is far from the easiest of all wit. In a letter to his brother Wilhelm, he refers once more to the effect of the Reaction on his chosen literary medium: "Die Revolution hat wirklich schauderhaft unter den Menschen gewirtschaftet. (...) Teilweise spüre ich diese schwachmatische Stimmung an mir selbst; mein

86. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, pp. 484-5.

87. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 488.

88. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 488.

alter Humor will nicht wiederkehren."⁸⁹

The abrupt swing from amusement to vituperation within the final stages of the novel Schnapphahnski reflects not only the dismal progress of the Revolution but also the attitude of radical observers, as expressed by the editors of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, towards the middle class. Marx decided at the outset that the paper should not be directed solely at a proletarian readership but should urge the middle class to carry on the struggle against absolutism. This proposal was originally made in his Manifesto: "In Deutschland kämpft die Kommunistische Partei, sobald die Bourgeoisie revolutionär auftritt, gemeinsam mit der Bourgeoisie gegen die absolute Monarchie, das feudale Grundeigentum und die Kleinbürgerei."⁹⁰ Within the context of 1848, a paper aimed principally at the workers, such as Stephan Born's Das Volk, had a minimal influence on a mainly middle-class Revolution, and therefore the Neue Rheinische Zeitung followed a policy of tactical cooperation with the bourgeoisie. Weerth's Schnapphahnski reflects this policy by pointing out the despicable nature of a representative of the counter-revolutionary aristocracy to a reader whose middle-class sensibilities are assumed to be delicate and whose education sufficient to comprehend the learned references, and by implicitly advocating continuation of the struggle against the type of enemy it portrays.

However, as the liberal bourgeoisie proved itself incapable of implementing a policy of moderate reform in the face of the Reaction or, in more specific terms, as the crumbling National Assembly watched the royal troops enter Berlin and Vienna, the Neue Rheinische Zeitung withdrew its support

⁸⁹ Georg Weerth, quoted by Karl Weerth, p. 63.

⁹⁰ Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, Vol. IV, p. 492.

from those it considered had betrayed the Revolution, and spoke more strongly of non-payment of taxes, proletarian mobilisation and armed struggle. In a letter of mid-1849, Weerth refers contemptuously to those who still do not realise "daß eine Zeit herangebrochen ist, wo die alte Gesellschaft sich löst und zwei Klassen einander gegenübertreten im Todeskampf: die Bourgeoisie und das Proletariat."⁹¹ At the end of his novel he draws a similarly powerful contrast between the bourgeois philistine, "dem dummen souveränen Michel,"⁹² who has been deceived into believing the fine words spoken by the absolutist rulers at the Cathedral festivities, and the proletarians who have died on the streets of Paris, Vienna and Berlin.

In the context of Weerth's mood of pessimism when the novel was published, his final exclamation: "Mein Schnapphahnski ist unsterblich!"⁹³ can be described as despondent rather than triumphal. If the aims of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung had been realised, the Revolution would have destroyed not only the prototype Lichnowski, but also Schnapphahnski, the epitome of his reactionary, dilettante spirit. But the ability of counter-revolutionary forces to recover completely from the paralysis of early 1848 seemed to justify Schnapphahnski's claim to immortality.

91. Georg Weerth, Vol. V, pp. 317-18.

92. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 488.

93. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 489.

Chapter Two : Satires against Philistinism

I

Adolf Glasbrenner

"Ein garstig Lied, pfui,
ein politisch Lied!"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

For Weerth and Prutz, the satirical form of political literature was but one of their means of expression, but Adolf Glasbrenner, whose name occurs in accounts of 'Jungdeutschland' in the 1830s, who made the difficult transition to the literary militancy of the 1840s and continued to write for another two decades after the Revolution, possessed a rarely changing satirical style. Political circumstances caused his targets to vary slightly, but his attacks on the absolutist bureaucracy and bourgeois philistinism were always expressed with the wit and humour typical of his native Berlin. The superficial light-heartedness of his writings, which appeared in a series of small newspapers, periodicals and magazines rather than in book form, gave him a reputation, in later years, of a harmless jester, for it was easy to select from the multiplicity of his output only those articles devoid of political 'Tendenz'. Glasbrenner himself condemned such attempts to emasculate his work: "Noch heute bin ich der Masse nichts mehr als ein Hofnarr, der der Tyrannei unter der Maske des Scherzes bittere Wahrheiten zuruft. Das wäre nun, gut verstanden, etwas, aber ich will die Tyrannei nicht belustigen, ich will nicht ihr Narr sein."¹

The authorities in Berlin during the 1830s and 1840s, however, did not consider him to be a harmless phenomenon.

1. Quoted by Willi Finger, Adolf Glasbrenner: ein Vorkämpfer der Demokratie. Berlin, Kongress-Verlag, 1952, p. 50.

His first paper, Berliner Don Quixote, was banned by the Frankfurt 'Hundestag', as he called it, in 1833, as was his critical picture of Metternich's Austria, Bilder und Träume aus Wien. His aptly titled Verbotene Lieder of 1843 received the treatment indicated by their author, and his narrative poem Der neue Reineke Fuchs, a satire on the Jesuits, was also banned, in 1846. After the Revolution his name featured in the infamous Black Book of the Reaction, and he lived in exile in Hamburg until 1858, when he returned to his beloved Berlin so as to avoid losing his citizenship.

In the nomenclature of German ideological and social categorisation, Glaßbrenner is usually described as a 'Kleinbürger'. Jost Hermand sums up evaluations of his political stance in the phrase: "kleinbürgerlich-demokratischer Börne-Anhänger,"² while Klaus Gysi states: "Sein politischer Standpunkt war der des revolutionären, demokratischen Kleinbürgers."³ The essence of these characterisations lies in the fact that Glaßbrenner's close knowledge of and identification with the small traders, 'Handwerker', and factory labourers of Berlin allow him to reproduce their characteristic humour and means of expression in a literary form, while his articulation of their grudges reveals no vision of a new social order beyond the destruction of princely absolutism and the establishment of an emotional ideal of freedom. "Ist die Freiheit erst einmal geschaffen," he claims confidently in his Volkskalender, "so

2. Jost Hermand, in: Adolf Glaßbrenner, Der politisierende Eckensteher. Stuttgart, Reclam, 1969, p. 237.

3. Klaus Gysi, in: Adolf Glaßbrenner, Unsterblicher Volkswitz Vol. I. Berlin, Das neue Berlin, 1954. A third edition of Glaßbrenner's works will also be used: Unterm Brennglas. Ed. Franz Diederich. Berlin, Vorwärts, 1912, but in order to avoid tedious repetition, all subsequent quotations from Glaßbrenner's works deriving from the editions of Gysi, Hermand and Diederich will be acknowledged with the abbreviations "Volkswitz"(I or II), "Eckensteher" and "Brennglas."

sorgt die menschliche Vernunft für ein harmonisches Zusammenleben."⁴ This statement and others like it indicate that their author is not a profound social thinker but rather, an acute social observer or even, in the words of Heinrich Laube, a photographer.⁵ In a sense his philosophy is no deeper than the characters whose idiosyncratic speech and mannerisms he reproduces so expertly. Unfamiliar with the new social theories propounded by Marx and Engels, he thinks in terms of the People rather than in categories of bourgeoisie and proletariat: "Das Volk war für ihn eine kaum differenzierte Einheit von Bürgern, Kleinbürgern, Arbeitern, Bauern, Tagelöhnern."⁶ In an era of as yet embryonic proletarian development, Glasbrenner envisages no conflict between middle and working classes, contenting himself with moral appeals for a more equitable distribution of wealth. "Das Kapital muß weniger, die Arbeit höher gelten,"⁷ he suggests vaguely. In his pre-revolutionary 'Märchen vom Reichtum und der Not', he writes of a brother and sister who personify wealth and poverty. The brother ignores the deprivation of the sister until the final stanza, when an allegorical revolution occurs:

"An einem schönen Morgen
Schlug sie ihren Bruder tot."⁸

But in a subsequent dialogue he resolves the 'Suppenfrage' by less drastic means: a starving waif is fed by a generous 'Handwerksmeister' who believes in sharing his income with those in need.⁹

As a radical writer of the 'Vormärz' era, accustomed to

4. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz I, p. 30.

5. Quoted by Jost Hermand in: Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 240.

6. Klaus Gysi, in: Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz I, p. 34.

7. Adolf Glasbrenner, Brennglas, p. 29.

8. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 140.

9. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, pp. 140-3.

constant sniping at the apparently immovable façade of absolutism, Glaßbrenner greets the Revolution with abundant enthusiasm but also finds himself confronted with the problem of adjusting to the new freedom and of filling the governmental void with proposals in accordance with his own ideals. Ironically, but with more than a modicum of seriousness, he exclaims in his Freie Blätter of 1848: "Wir haben uns von den Siren die Freiheit genommen und rufen nun den Himmel an, gib uns Gedanken!" for he realises: "Es ist leichter, für die Freiheit zu dichten als in ihr."¹⁰ After the banning of his writings in December 1848 by the reactionary forces headed by General Wrangel, who organised the military occupation of Berlin, he moved to Mecklenburg-Strelitz and in 1849 produced a pamphlet, 'Zwanzig Forderungen der Mecklenburger', pressing for moderate goals, some of which had been attained in the March days but had been again suppressed: equality before the law, democratic elections, the abolition of privileges, the right of free assembly, a reduction in the size of the standing army, German unity and "Deutschlands Glück!"¹¹ However, he regarded the Frankfurt Parliament, the supposed architect of unity, with scepticism from the moment of its inception. In his ironic poem, 'Raritäten von 1848', he writes laconically:

"Hier, in Frankfurt an dem Main,
Große Parlamente
Mitten in der Kirchen drein:
Tausend Sackermerte!
Maaken deutsche Einigkeit,
Sein sehr kluk un sehr gescheit,
Maaken schöne Rede."¹²

Glaßbrenner's satirical targets are twofold. First, he attacks the monolith of 'Vormärz' reactionary authority, which

10. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz I, p. 36.

11. Quoted by Willi Finger, pp. 77-8.

12. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 295.

is viewed not so much as a tissue of conservative motifs ranging from Schelling's philosophy to the Cologne Cathedral, in the manner of Prutz, but rather as a personification of a few types symbolic of popular oppression - policemen, soldiers, right-wing politicians and the princes themselves. After the collapse of this structure in March 1848, Glaßbrenner slightly adjusts the focus of his satirical sights, although he continues to warn against presupposing the lasting quiescence of the absolutist régimes. His second area of concern is the bourgeois philistine. 'Der deutsche Michel', that stereotype of German passivity in the face of authoritarian government, the character who ignores danger in the hope that it will disappear, who sides opportunistically with whichever political faction appears to occupy a dominant position, but quickly withdraws from any confrontation, features frequently in the writings of Glaßbrenner.¹³ Although he seems to have only a general idea of the course the Revolution should follow, he remains constantly alert to the forces which, directly or indirectly, impede its progress. Ever wary of resurgent absolutism, he regards the 'Michel'-type as an equally dangerous reactionary force, whose very inertia promotes a return to 'Vormärz' conditions. He thus typifies the theory of Arntzen, who describes satire as a striving towards a utopia attainable by pointing out present evils without concern for the details of the ultimate goal. Satire, concludes Arntzen, "ist die wahre Geschichte. Diese kann nicht erzählt werden, weil sie in der Zukunft liegt."¹⁴

In the early twentieth century Franz Diederich attempted

13. See especially his exposé of the 'Michel'-type in 'Der neue deutsche Philister', Volkswitz II, p. 355.

14. Helmut Arntzen, p. 17.

to analyse the radical 'kleinbürgerlich' philosophy of Glasbrenner, and in the 1950s Klaus Gysi performed a similar task in the introduction to his comprehensive edition of Glasbrenner's works.¹⁵ But the diversity of material available usually leads either to vague generalisation or to a series of isolated quotations and references which largely preclude an appreciation of the author's literary and ideological development. By concentrating on one aspect of Glasbrenner's work, such as his treatment of the Revolution, one may examine closely a narrower range of satirical personalities whose dialogues embrace the period leading up to 1848. There are several characters who recur frequently during this time, including Herr Rentier Buffey, one of Glasbrenner's most successful inventions, and the politically perspicacious Guckkästner.

a. Herr Buffey

The personalities who recur in Glasbrenner's large output during the 1840s usually express an anti-absolutist, primitive but healthy activist philosophy, and can be described as reflective of their creator's own views. Herr Buffey, who makes his first appearance in Glasbrenner's literary sketches of 1835 and his last in 1849, comments forthrightly on and is involved in a wide range of 'Vormärz' and revolutionary phenomena. He is a complex figure, described by Hermand as an awakened 'Michel', "der sich im Laufe der Jahre aus einem typischen Weißbierphilister und kleinbürgerlichen Rentier zum Vertreter des 'gesunden Volksempfindens' entwickelt und schließlich zum Antipoden der üblichen Mucker- und Spießerseelen wird."¹⁶ Transcending his own social status, described caustically by Glasbrenner in an article entitled 'Naturgeschichte

¹⁵. See p. 122 above.

¹⁶. Jost Hermand, in: Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 242.

des Rentiers' which brands this type of property owner as an idle parasite on society,¹⁷ Buffey becomes the author's mouth-piece as a humorously perceptive observer of Berlin life in the 1840s. In the early sketches his rôle is that of a fellow-traveller who makes witty comments in company but is not otherwise distinct from his card-playing associates. The scene 'Auf der Berlin-Leipziger Eisenbahn' which deals mainly with a comparison of Prussia and Bavaria, shows Buffey as a philistine opportunist who warns another passenger against using the word 'Vivat', with its associations of left-wing enthusiasm. He himself admits: "Pereat, des laß ich mir jefallen. Wenn jetzt en Freiheitsheld nach Berlin kommt, denn schrei ick uf de Straße Pereat."¹⁸

A new, more militant Buffey emerges in the 'Zaruckgesellschaft' of 1843, the first of several sketches in which he plays the rôle of common sense in the midst of a group of fanatics, usually of a reactionary nature. The characters Buffey confronts are unenlightened bourgeois philistines who, consciously or unconsciously, support the continuation of absolutism. In the case of the apocryphal 'Zaruckgesellschaft', whose members bear appropriate names such as Schatten, Schafskopp, Dunkelinsky and Kriechling, the specific goal is a reactionary one or, as the President describes it: "...die neuerung-süchtige, jlaublose, forteilende und nach züjelloser Freiheit strebende Zeit aufzuhalten und also zur alten Sitte, zur alten Ordnung und zur alten Frömmigkeit zurückzubringen!"¹⁹ The delegates demand measures such as the closure of all theatres which contribute to the propagation of radical and anti-monarch-

17. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, pp. 456-60.

18. Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 96.

19. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz I, p. 283.

ical ideas, and even suggest the banning of all writers along with their literature. Eventually Buffey, who has watched with growing amazement, joins with the left-winger Worum in denouncing the increasingly ridiculous proposals of the 'Zarucker'. After heated exchanges they are both expelled from the society.²⁰ This type of political forum is Glaßbrenner's favourite method of expressing a variety of viewpoints within a social genre. As Hermand points out, the characterisations contain a mélange of stereotype comedy and political satire,²¹ but the scenes written during the mid to late 1840s incline increasingly towards the latter. From behind the good-humoured anti-absolutist anecdotes of Buffey, for instance, emerges the High German invective of Worum, who voices the convictions beneath Glaßbrenner's smiling exterior: "Diese Deutschbestrebungen unserer Politik ist ihre lächerlichste Seite," he exclaims in an emotive attack on Pan-Germanic nationalism. "Dieses Haßeinimpfen gegen fremde, uns in ihren Institutionen überragende Nationalitäten leiht nur den Machinationen gegen das Volk Vorspann."²² This comment is indicative of Glaßbrenner's attitude towards the problem of unity and freedom; the former he regards as a right-wing excuse for restricting personal liberty.

Clergymen of both Catholic and Protestant confessions, and religion in general, appear to Glaßbrenner to be pillars of absolutism and reaction. His most sustained attack is to be found in the anti-Jesuit Neuen Reineke Fuchs, but his Buffey series satirises both Protestant conservatism and the Catholic cult of relics. The latter provides the theme of 'Herrn Buffeys

20. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz I, pp. 282-96.

21. Jost Hermand, 'Adolf Glaßbrenner. Berlin wie es ist und - trinkt'. In: Hermand, Unbequeme Literatur. Eine Beispielsreihe. Heidelberg, Lothar Stiehm, 1971, p. 80.

22. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz I, p. 289.

Wallfahrt nach dem heiligen Rock',²³ which illustrates attitudes of curiosity, scepticism and contempt towards the cloak, said to have belonged to Christ and to possess miraculous healing qualities. Although Buffey is dubious about the validity of the cure stories, he resolves to accompany his friends to Trier where the cloak is on display. In a wine shop in the city he voices loud objections to the entry fee for viewing the cloak ("verdammte deuer; da kann man ja in Berlin die schönste Komödie vor sehen, un nich bloß Röcke, sondern wo noch Jehalt drin is"²⁴), speculates as to whether the cloak may cure his son's stupidity and is in the midst of quoting one of Luther's pithier statements on holy relics when he is forcibly ejected by the enraged crowd of devout but unthinking pilgrims. Again Buffey emerges as a lone voice of 'kleinbürgerlich' reason in a desert of hostile conservatism and obscurantism. Even inside the Cathedral he shows more interest in the cloak's apparent lack of moth infestation than in its alleged properties, and he departs in a sceptical frame of mind.

The reformed churches, officially recognised in Prussia and consequently obvious collaborators with the régime of Friedrich Wilhelm, receive Glasbrenner's satirical attention in 'Herr Buffey im Tugendverein',²⁵ where the parliamentary procedures and militant conservatism resemble those of the 'Zaruckgesellschaft'. Buffey, who believes it his duty to acquaint himself with the rituals of such organisations, "weil es meine Schuldigkeit als Staatsmitglied is, alle Kulturspitzen, nennt man des, kennenzulernen, persönlich!",²⁶ again combines an urge for greater knowledge with what Diederich calls an

23. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, pp. 217-27.

24. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 221.

25. Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, pp. 101-20.

26. Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 109.

acute "Urteilsbedürfnis und Widerspruchstrotz,"²⁷ and condemns the quiescent philosophy of pointless self-denial practised by the 'Verein' members. Rebellious and questioning as ever, the enlightened 'Vormärzler' Buffey refuses to accept a doctrine of infinite sinfulness, passive humility, silent mortification of the flesh, and increasing virtue through the drinking of water. Therefore he soon clashes with the philistine members and is forcibly removed, but not before he delivers a strong affirmation of 'kleinbürgerlich' radicalism:

"Ja, ich bin en Plebejer un bin stolz darauf! (...) Plebejer sind Menschen, die noch en bisken Leidenschaft un Mut haben, während die andern ausjelutschte, eijennütziye, bequeme, kriecherische Schufte sind, die, wenn se ihren Bauch voll haben un mit den Viertelskommsarius jut stehen, die arme Welt loofen lassen wie se will."²⁸

These words, which form the most coherent expression of Buffey's belligerence, represent his nearest approach to a social philosophy, or at least an awareness of injustice. He opposes the bourgeois philistines not simply because they wield unjust economic power over the plebeians among whom he counts himself, despite his independent income, but because they seek only their own advantage and they compromise happily with absolutism in order to achieve it, while ignoring the poor and salving their consciences with a weekly religious ritual: "Statt wat zu bessern, speist ihr den janzen Kummer und den janzen Hunger mit Helfjott! ab un vertröst't die andern uf'n Himmel, weil Ihr ihnen uf de Erde allens fortfrißt!"²⁹ Towards the end of the scene, the satire produced by the words of the 'Verein' members fades into the background as Buffey delivers a prolonged attack on those who hinder social progress by supporting the evils of absolutism.

27. Franz Diederich, in: Adolf Glasbrenner, Brennglas, p. 62.

28. Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 116.

29. Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 119.

Buffey's attitude to the quickly changing situations of 1848 and 1849 can best be traced in his 'Tagebuch', a series of random observations on events of the time. Before the Revolution he claims to be "ein sehr guter Untertan" but adds: "Ich will frei sein,"³⁰ which epitomises his double attitude of middle-class external subservience to the demands of absolutist society and simultaneous ironical observation of its figureheads. He evinces a certain emotional sympathy with the poor ("dieses Elend ist nicht zu beschreiben"³¹), a dislike of the royal police and a disdain for intellectuals ("unsere deutschen Stockdummgelehrten"³²) while the events of March 1848 cause an emotional response similar to the enthusiasm in Glaßbrenner's own letters to his wife. Present in Berlin during the March days, Glaßbrenner admitted his joy was so great "daß ich die Tränen nicht länger halten konnte, daß ich auf offener Straße wie ein Kind weinte,"³³ while Buffey, overcome by the same sense of achievement of 'kleinbürgerlich' goals, greets the apparent dawn of a new age with a bottle of champagne, the solemn inscription of the words "wir sind frei" in his diary, and the addition of a black-red-gold ribbon to his button-hole. The news of Metternich's fall makes him ecstatic: "Österreich, sage Österreich, ne sage es noch mal: Österreich is frei!!! Ich habe jeweent wie en Kind, wie ich des jelesen habe."³⁴ But, like his creator, Buffey quickly becomes anxious about the possibility of a reactionary backlash; although the pre-revolutionary régimes remain intact, short-sighted observers claim there is no question of a Reaction, but Buffey believes the

30. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 159.

31. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 164.

32. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 165.

33. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 264.

34. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 301.

victorious forces must act swiftly to retain their advantage: "Die halben Zaruckerchens sagen immer von de Volkspartei: 'Die Demokraten jehen zu weit.' Aber ich jloobe im Jegenteil, wenn die Demokraten nich noch weiter jehen, denn werden sie bald alle in't Jefängnis sitzen."³⁵ These prophetic words are soon succeeded by an entry which refers to the Revolution in the past tense ("Im März hatten wir unsre Revolution") and on the same page he recalls with High German gravity Ludwig Börne's theory that the first crimes of freedom are really the last of tyranny, but he himself paraphrases it to suit the present situation by pointing out that any subsequent crimes of freedom are really those of the Reaction, for the only crime able to be committed by freedom is its own death.³⁶ Thus ends the Buffey series, on a note of bitterness towards those who failed to consolidate the gains of March and were eventually silenced by the Reaction.

b. Guckkästner

If Buffey can be described as a liberal fellow-traveller, which is the term used by Hermand,³⁷ then the Guckkästner series constitutes a more public form of radical agitation. As the name suggests, the Guckkästner presents politically-oriented peepshows on Berlin street corners, and accompanies the showing of diverse scenes with an anti-absolutist, ironical commentary, whose criticism becomes increasingly overt during the course of the 1840s. He is a witty, belligerent man of middle age, intolerant of interruption to his eloquent observations on the scenes depicted, and inspired by a healthy 'kleinbürgerlich' scepticism towards the occupants of power even

35. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 306.

36. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 308.

37. Jost Hermand, p. 83.

when he professes superficial submission to them. Between 1835, when he presents mainly harmless curiosities from foreign countries, and 1849, when he ends his career with defiant condemnation of the Reaction, he features frequently in the writings of Glasbrenner.

The Guckkästner is a survivor of the so-called Wars of Liberation, which drew the German states together for the purpose of expelling Napoleon, and whose aftermath failed to produce the constitutions and popular representation promised by the princes to their subjects in return for support in driving out the invader. Only the South German states of Bavaria, Baden and Württemberg received constitutions, but even these were imposed by their monarchs and not adopted by popular decision. Furthermore, the Austrian-dominated 'Bundestag' set up by Metternich in Frankfurt remained virtually powerless. The bitterness which was the legacy of the Restoration period can be detected in the Guckkästner of the 1840s. When a youthful listener mocks him, he retorts sharply: "Spotten Sie nich über einen Invaliden, oder er wird noch mal wieder Krieger. Wir haben unser Vaterland frei gemacht!",³⁸ but when the other demands particulars, he relapses uncomfortably into silence.

In 1843 the scenes he shows tend to derive from areas remote to a Berlin audience but generally representative of despotic rule. The Emperor of China is a favourite symbol of absolutism, also used by Prutz in his Wochenstube, while the intrigues surrounding the Spanish throne, a meeting between

38. Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 177. (In 1846 he refers with disguised bitterness to the Vienna congress of 1815:

"Da hat sich des Jeojrafvieh so den Magen verdorben, daß sie ihm 1815 in Wien en Abführungsmittel einjeben mußten, wobei denn natürlich manche Nationen sehr schlecht bedient sind." Volkswitz II, p. 194)

Queen Victoria and Louis Philippe, and the death of the Pope in Rome, contain similarly exotic material. The fact that these situations are intended as veiled comments on the current system in Prussia becomes more evident in the scene which allegedly shows the king of Greece granting a constitution under pressure from the crowd outside his palace. The Guckkästner draws a universal conclusion from this situation when he comments: "Die letzte französische Revolution dauerte drei Tage; die griechische nur drei Stunden, und wenn eine Nation was will (...), so kann sie alles in drei Minuten abmachen."³⁹ As a contrast to the other scenes, he includes views of Switzerland, the fortress of republicanism, with peaceful landscapes of an idyllic quality, but the reality of the current lack of freedom in Prussia presents itself finally in the form of a policeman, who forces the conclusion of the showing.

By 1846 the Guckkästner's irony of presentation has moved towards cynicism, although he must still be wary of passing policemen. With tongue in cheek, he claims to possess "die übertriebene Untertanentreue" and accuses the right-wing Voßische Zeitung of dangerous liberalism.⁴⁰ But he proceeds to show a further series of scenes, similar to those of 1843, representing various manifestations of absolutism - a dying Pope, Louis Bonaparte, a church synod ("welche teils aus Priestern und teils aus Menschen besteht"⁴¹), the Spanish Queen, the Austrian Kaiser, with an idyllic interlude in the form of another republican Swiss landscape and a portrait of the radical poet Hoffmann von Fallersleben. Indicative of the Guckkästner's cynical attitude towards the Prussian government

39. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 182.

40. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, pp. 192-3.

41. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 197.

is his representation of the Prussian constitution, a blank sheet of paper which allows each viewer his preferred interpretation and obviates disputes.

The Revolution is greeted by the Guckkästner with an ecstasy similar to that of Buffey and of Glaßbrenner himself. But whereas Buffey's celebration is of an essentially private nature, the Guckkästner continues his street vigil unhampered by 'Vormärz' restrictions. He becomes a singer of political songs, urging on passers-by the continuation of the Revolution, and attempting to allay the fears of the timid middle class. As Hermand points out: "Er sieht ganz genau, daß der Elan der Märztage nicht ausgereicht hat, alle Biedermänner der Restaurationsepoche zu selbstbewußten Citoyens zu bekehren."⁴² In warning his listeners of the dangers of passive philistinism, the Guckkästner reaches a peak of militant anti-monarchical fervour, urging the people to spit in the faces of the German princes:

"Wie es einst erjing in Hessen,
Dieses is nich zu ermessen.
Kaum vermag man es zu hören,
Ohne einen Schwur zu schwören
Daß, wenn's noch einmal jeschieht,
All' wir speien in's Gesicht
Solch jekrönten Schurken!"⁴³

But by 1849, the final year of his appearance, the Guckkästner has reverted to the veiled cynicism necessitated by the reasserted power of absolutism. He describes 1849 as "das jroße adlije Jahr, welches dazu bestimmt war, die Niederträchtigkeiten der europe'e'schen Völker jejen ihre erhabne Fürschten wiederjutzumachen,"⁴⁴ thus reversing completely the theme of his rhetoric during the previous year. The "Rrr" sound

42. Jost Hermand, p. 85.

43. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 274.

44. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 330.

he previously uttered as an introduction to a new picture is now extended to "Rrr...eaktion," and the idealisation of America as a fortress of freedom and a refuge for enslaved Europeans, a myth popularised by Ernst Willkomm in his 1838 novel Die Europamüden, makes its appearance in his pictures and commentaries. He shows scenes of Californian prosperity and advises a listener, who seeks freedom, to emigrate. The Americans, he claims, are not only rich but free, for they utilise their money, not on royal courts, aristocracy, countless bureaucrats, police, diplomats and military personnel, but for the advancement of their own people.⁴⁵ The United States was in fact a common destination for those forced to leave Germany after the Revolution, and the Guckkästner's bitterness makes his idealisation of transatlantic conditions understandable, but the novel Der Amerikamüde, published by Ferdinand Kürnberger in 1856, indicates that some emigrants became disillusioned. To his nervous listeners, who demand impartiality and loyalty to the régime in his presentation, the Guckkästner addresses a final salutation: "Na, denn schlafen Sie wohl!"⁴⁶ which can be interpreted as symptomatic of post-revolutionary Prussia and an atmosphere which no longer permitted the Guckkästner to express his views in public.

c. Miscellaneous

In the continuing stream of satirical sketches, observations and poems produced by Glasbrenner during the revolutionary period, there are several which sum up the quickly changing trends of the age. One of the longer scenes taking the form of a debate is entitled 'Eine Volksjury in Berlin'⁴⁷ and pre-

45. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 336.

46. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 337.

47. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, pp. 239-47.

sumably dates from the period when the gains of March were still in force, for the participants, mainly 'Handwerker' and radical 'Kleinbürger', speak forthrightly without fear of police intervention. They conduct an imaginary trial, in which law and human rights as practised under 'Vormärz' conditions confront "natural" law, but their arguments in favour of the latter never develop beyond an indefinite, emotional appeal for "Gesetze mit Herz," while the few conservative delegates defend the previous legal system on the Old Hegelian basis of long-term existence as a proof of validity. Although Glaßbrenner introduces several of his oft-repeated theories, such as the importance of the Common Man's native wit in raising him above the classes of academics and philistines, he also portrays the meeting as an exercise in futility, as a babble of voices debating abstruse issues in the manner of the pre-revolutionary organisations visited by Herr Buffey, and essentially as an illustration of his own complaint that the freedoms produced by 1848 brought to light a certain helplessness on the part of those who had striven for them.

In the torrent of satirical publications headed by Kladderadatsch and Die Lokomotive, Glaßbrenner's Freie Blätter of 1848 made little impression, but his writings during the occupation of Berlin by the army of General Wrangel and in the period of increasing repression in 1849 show a new impetus based on his antagonism towards the timid middle class, which he considered to have betrayed the Revolution. Radical observations in public can now be made only by those affected by alcohol, as in 'Szene aus der Berliner Abend-Nationalversammlung', where an unsteady passer-by asserts his right, conferred in March, to speak freely, and complains of the abundance of constables, one of whom threatens to arrest him unless he

moves along and keeps silent.⁴⁸ His solutions to the current problems of Germany show a certain primitive logic; to the question of whether Prussia should be assimilated in Germany, an assertion made in March by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, he replies: "En Quart kann nich in en Achtelglas ufjehen, aber en Achtel kann in 'ne Quartflasche ufjehen, folglich muß Preußen in Deutschland ufjehen," and on the subject of the abolition of aristocratic titles, he exclaims: "Wenn wir noch eenen Splitter von all die Stammbeeme übriglassen, denn sind wir alle Ochsen."⁴⁹ However, the threatening presence of the constable and the mental state of the speaker serve to underline the fact that the time for such radical solutions has already passed.

In the sketch 'Eine Urwählerversammlung unter Wrangel',⁵⁰ the speakers express their opposition to Friedrich Wilhelm's dissolution of the Prussian Assembly, his imposition of a constitution and the restoration of 'Vormärz' repression, but the bravely revolutionary words of the chairman ("Ich spreche die Wahrheit, und die Wahrheit kann von keinem Bajonett durchbohrt, von keiner Kugel getötet werden"⁵¹) are countered by a variety of state officials and agents who, although powerless to stem the flow of rhetoric at the meeting, possess sufficient military backing to determine the future political direction of society. Furthermore, right-wing voices within the gathering support their demand for delegates who will meekly accept the king's planned constitution. The majority of members, however, follow the lead given by the chairman and call for the election of democratic representatives who would presumably attempt to con-

48. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, pp. 317-19.

49. Adolf Glasbrenner, Volkswitz II, p. 319.

50. Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, pp. 187-220.

51. Adolf Glasbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 188.

tinue the work of the Revolution. Of course, the shouts of "Nieder mit den gierigen Raben! Nieder, nieder mit der Reaktion!"⁵² and the claim: "Wir geben uns durch unsre Vertreter eine Verfassung, nachdem wir uns von den Lasten und Nichtswürdigkeiten der alten Despotie befreit haben"⁵³ are meaningless within the context of Wrangel's military grip on Berlin, although they demonstrate the continued radicalism of the 'kleinbürgerlich' and proletarian sectors of the community. As is to be expected, the meeting ends inconclusively.

For Glaßbrenner, the early months of 1848 had been the climax of nearly two decades' production of political literature, and the triumph of the Reaction, which forced him to leave Berlin, exercised a profound influence on his writing. "Dann wurde er mehr und mehr von der Resignation überwältigt,"⁵⁴ notes Hermand, while Diederich points out: "Glaßbrenner hat zu denen gehört, die im Grunde nie über die Zeit, die unter der Herrschaft Börnes stand, hinaus kamen. Darauf beruhte einst ein Gutteil seiner Kraft und jetzt seine Schwäche."⁵⁵ He remained true to his own dictum: "Das politisch Lied ist das eigentliche Lied der Menschheit,"⁵⁶ a direct contradiction of the well-known opinion expressed by the drunken student in Goethe's Faust. And so, in the post-revolutionary era of renewed repression, his principal inspiration could no longer find expression. A survivor of 'Jungdeutschland' and 'Vormärz' who documented the personality traits, the humour and political attitudes of his fellow-citizens, Glaßbrenner was a unique

52. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 215.

53. Adolf Glaßbrenner, Eckensteher, p. 217.

54. Jost Hermand, p. 69.

55. Franz Diederich, in: Adolf Glaßbrenner, Brennglas, p. 59.

56. Quoted by Jost Hermand, p. 77.

satirical observer and commentator, an 'Eckensteher' in his own right, a writer of the people who produced no literary heirs because the Germany he knew had ceased to exist.

II

Georg Weerth and a bourgeois merchant in the Revolution

"Ich weiß nicht, was ein Mensch ist. Ich kenne
nur seinen Preis." Bertolt Brecht

If the weaknesses of Schnapphahnski can be traced at least partially to Weerth's lack of familiarity with the aristocracy, then his Humoristische Skizzen aus dem deutschen Handelsleben⁵⁷ are much more firmly based, for the central character Herr Preiss, although differing in detail from his namesake in the Fragment eines Romans, still derives his essential inspiration from Ferdinand aus'm Weerth, the paternal relative for whom Georg worked in 1842. Inexplicably, Bruno Kaiser praises Schnapphahnski more highly, but Florian Vaßen⁵⁸ and others recognise that the Skizzen represent Weerth's writing at its best.

The first four chapters were published in a series by the Kölnische Zeitung in late 1847 and early 1848, but the following five chapters were never printed. Chapters X-XIV appeared in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung of June and July 1848. While the composition of Schnapphahnski covers the period when Revolution gradually developed into Reaction, the Skizzen reflect the increasing aggressiveness of the end of the 'Vor-märz' and the first months of 1848. Whereas the conclusion of

57. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 347-485.

58. Florian Vaßen, pp. 111-23. He lists five areas in which the Skizzen surpass Schnapphahnski: greater structural unity, authorial familiarity with the subject matter, a more rounded central character, moderated polemics and lasting social validity.

Schnapphahnski looks back with bitterness on the thwarted revolutionary progress, the end of the Skizzen allows for the possibility of further positive developments. The Revolution is the unstated climax of Schnapphahnski and the actual climax of the Skizzen. Herr Preiss becomes the subject of a detailed analysis of the middle class's conduct during the first months of 1848.

The continuation of the name Preiss allowed Weerth to make further punning use of his friend Engels's dissertation on the relationship between price and value, but, as already indicated, the central character of the Skizzen cannot be treated as absolutely identical with Herr Preiss in the Fragment. The former is a merchant, operating with a small staff of like-minded philistines, while the latter directs a factory and employs a large number of workers at a subsistence level. Both worship money, for they belong to the same social class, but the crime of the industrialist Preiss lies in his exploitation of his employees, while the merchant increases his wealth by deception of his predominantly middle-class customers.

In an accompanying note to the first chapter of the Skizzen in the Kölnische Zeitung Weerth describes his intention as an attempt to analyse "das viel verkannte deutsche Handelsleben in seiner ganzen Heiterkeit,"⁵⁹ a prescription somewhat more innocuous than the actual work as it emerged, but nevertheless accurate insofar as he restricts himself to a dramatised description, virtually free from authorial intervention, of the bourgeois trader's competitive and opportunistic attitude towards others and, in the final chapters, towards revolution. As the early chapter headings indicate ('Der Lehrling', 'Der

⁵⁹ Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 502.

Korrespondent', 'Der Buchhalter' and so on), Weerth analyses the appearance and attitudes of a variety of people associated with the mercantile process and approaches the central character Herr Preiss through the filter of his office subordinates. All are instilled with their employer's seriousness, his dedication to hard work, and his reverence for money and advantageous business practice. The first nine chapters, in fact, merely illustrate variations on the theme of capitalism and its dehumanising effects. The new apprentice is initiated by Preiss into a process which has all the trappings, imagery and rhetoric of a solemn ecclesiastical rite: "Sie verrichten Ihr Gebet und gehen dann auf die Post," he begins. "Glücklich der, welcher in gemäßigtem Wechselverhältnis mit der Gesellschaft steht; ihn werden nicht Rost, nicht Motten und nicht die Zinsen des Bankiers stören," he continues. "Mit dem Gelde muß man vorsichtig sein wie mit seiner Seele; Geld ist das A und O des Daseins." "Das Kopierbuch ist das Evangelium des Comptoirs."⁶⁰ These words have distinctly biblical overtones which are nonetheless rendered paradoxical and absurd by the ungodly message they express. Preiss's Old Testament pathos contains the warning that in financial matters friendship is suspended and all men become the bitterest of enemies, as each seeks to further his own interest.

The practical application of Preiss's philosophy becomes apparent in the second chapter, in which he dictates the essentials of business letters to be composed by the office 'Korrespondent'. For each situation presented by August as he reads to Preiss the contents of letters received, the merchant has an instant reply based on the exact amount of personal

60. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 352-6.

financial advantage to be derived from each. Other traits of the bourgeois trader become evident; he lacks interest in anything outside the world of commerce: "Ich befasse mich indes nur mit Zucker, Kaffee und Heringen; weiter reiche mein Horizont nicht."⁶¹ To the accountant Lenz he suggests that the invalid coins the firm has received should be redistributed among coachdrivers, workers and others who will not know the difference, while in the fourth chapter he dismisses the aged employee Sassafras, ostensibly for economic reasons.

Thus the first four chapters present the character of Preiss through the experience of the members of his staff, on an ascending scale. Each begins with a description and proceeds to elicit a trait of Herr Preiss in accordance with the duties of the particular employee. Weerth himself does not intervene to address the reader or to comment directly on character or events but rather, in contrast to his technique in Schnapphähnski, uses the probably more satisfactory satirical narrative. On the subject of the satirist's rôle, Jürgen-Wolfgang Goette writes: "Der Satiriker wählt aus; er stellt das dar, was er ablehnt,"⁶² and on the basis of this prescription, a satire which presents a character without explanation or emphasis on the part of the author must be judged more successful. The main satirical skill must therefore lie in the author's ability to infuse the work in a subtle manner with his ideological or philosophical rejection of the character. Weerth's hatred of the Schnapphähnski type betrays him into direct condemnation, but in the Skizzen he achieves a greater satirical effect by means of exaggeration which is sufficiently moderated to keep

61. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 364.

62. Jürgen-Wolfgang Goette, in: Georg Weerth, Humoristische Skizzen aus dem deutschen Handelsleben. Stuttgart, Reclam, 1971, p. 163.

the central figure at an individual rather than a stereotype level, and also by keeping himself in the background. As Goette points out: "Die Personen sprechen ihre eigene Satire. Sie entlarven sich von selbst."⁶³

The structural unity evident in Chapters I-IV is continued in Chapters V-IX, which introduce two further characters who elucidate the personality of Preiss. Each occupies two chapters. The commercial traveller Sommer, for whom Preiss seeks a colleague in 'Der Reisende, wie er sein soll', emerges as an acute pupil of his master in 'Der Reisende, wie er ist', furthering the kingdom of Preiss throughout the Rhineland.⁶⁴ With cunning the traveller has broken the commercial resistance of a group of Protestant pietists in Wuppertal and a Catholic theologian in Münster, thus reinforcing the paradoxical bond Weerth establishes between capitalism and religion.

While the two chapters dealing with the commercial traveller throw further light on Preiss's exploitation of profitable markets, the two which concern his exchanges with the stockbroker Emsig provide evidence of his circumspect methods of investing capital. Preiss questions the unimaginative Lenz who makes a variety of suggestions, all of which are at first rejected and then casually accepted by Preiss.⁶⁵ Lenz believes that an investment in Austria would be safe as long as there were no possibility of revolution, a word whose very utterance produces a startled reaction in both Preiss and Emsig. At this point Weerth provides what may have been an unwitting premonition of the final part of the Skizzen. For in Chapters X-XIV he adjusts the focus of his analysis

63. Jürgen-Wolfgang Goette, p. 166.

64. Georg Weerth, Sämtliche Werke Vol. II. Berlin, Aufbau, 1956-1957, pp. 387-409.

65. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 423-34.

of Preiss, moving from a basically static treatment of a 'Vor-märz' social type to a description of his activities within a limited historical period.

The change in emphasis is perceptible but not reprehensible in terms of conceptual unity. The fact that Weerth's narrative was conceived from the beginning as a series of largely self-contained sketches allowed him to make such a change without violating any structural conventions. By contrast, a similar change of emphasis in Schnapphahnski does not succeed to the same extent, as the boundary takes the form of a break rather than a transition, and the chapters dealing with the Revolution omit the central character almost entirely. In the Skizzen, however, the first months of a real Revolution provide Weerth with a ready-made opportunity to move beyond the laboratory atmosphere of social portraiture to a definite historical situation in which he can put to the test the upper middle-class attitudes elicited in the first part of the narrative. The moment which never arrives in the Fragment eines Romans and is complicated by Weerth's disillusion in Schnapphahnski, is utilised to the full in the Skizzen.

In an earlier chapter of the present work it was stated that the conduct of Preiss the merchant during the Revolution does not correspond with the apparent predictions made for his namesake in Weerth's unfinished novel,⁶⁶ where the industrialist, increasingly conscious of his economic power, considers attempting to unite fellow-members of the bourgeoisie as a prelude to entering the political arena. As a hindrance to this urge for extended influence, however, Weerth already perceives the vital factor of the timidity and the instinct for self-preserv-

66. See pp. 32-3 above.

ation shown by the property-owning class when threatened by a revolutionary movement, and he foresees the possibility that a revolution borne by the more enlightened elements of the middle class will encounter virtually insuperable difficulties when its many sideline supporters desert to the apparent security of existing monarchical régimes.⁶⁷ The doubt in the Fragment as to the relative strengths of these two opposing forces within the bourgeois mentality is resolved definitively in the Skizzen; Preiss the merchant fears the very thought of revolution, as the reference by Lenz to the possibility of an upheaval clearly indicates. Thus the chapter introducing the Revolution is aptly titled: 'Der Herr Preiss in Nöten'.⁶⁸

The morning sun shines red through the windows and an unusually emaciated Preiss complains of the bad times. In two lengthy diatribes he contrasts the peace of the 'Vormärz' age with the present upheaval; his first speech could be described as a manifesto of complacency, a panegyric on an age which allowed commerce to flourish while stifling political expression. The fact that the reader is well aware that Preiss also complained of bad times during the pre-revolutionary period gives greater irony to his pathos-filled evocation of an age of peace and harmony, hard work and profit, competition and contentment. Again he speaks of the capitalistic ritual with a hypocritical air of mystical reverence. In an obvious parody of the Lord's Prayer he announces: "Ruhig gaben wir Kredit, wie uns selbst kreditiert wurde," and continues: "Wir ließen leben und lebten." "Zufrieden waren wir mit Gott und aller Welt, weil wir zufrieden waren mit uns."⁶⁹ By contrast, his

67. See the words of the industrialist Preiss on the subject of commercial opportunism, readily extendable to the political sphere. (Quoted p. 34 above)

68. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 448.

69. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 450.

vision of revolution involves the stock terror objects bequeathed by 1789, the guillotine, the scaffold, tottering thrones and widespread starvation. Worst of all, commercial life is brought to a standstill, customers cannot pay their debts and the stock market collapses. He sees his own fate in characteristically religious terms: "Wie ein trauernder Jude an den Wassern zu Babylon, also sitze ich klagend auf meinem Comptoirstuhl."⁷⁰ His hysterical reaction is based on news from far-off Paris and Vienna, and so the outbreak of revolution in Berlin increases his anxiety. Like the 'Michel' figure in the writings of Glaßbrenner, usually sketched by the illustrators as a timid individual in a nightcap and carrying a candle, Preiss seeks refuge in his bed, after checking beneath it and loading two pistols.

At this juncture the reference to Glaßbrenner is an appropriate one, for the ensuing description of Preiss's dream corresponds closely with one of Glaßbrenner's 1848 sketches entitled 'Die Null', a dissertation on the origins and significance of the figure zero. The accompanying illustration, depicting an oval-shaped king beside a thin proletarian,⁷¹ elucidates Glaßbrenner's satirical intention and places it on the same level as Weerth's description of Preiss's vision. In his sleep, the merchant witnesses an allegorical revolution, in which the digits of his account book rebel against their dictatorial masters the zeros, who can claim validity only when the digits stand to their left.⁷² Weerth traces the progress of the revolution in detail, adorning it with popular petitions which are couched in the respectful jargon of the

70. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 452.

71. Adolf Glaßbrenner, *Brennglas*, p. 184. The coincidence is remarkable, but there is no real case for plagiarism by either Weerth or Glaßbrenner.

72. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, pp. 457-66.

time and followed by typically pompous royal proclamations on the part of the zeros. He also describes the appearance of the digital orators who incite their followers to destroy the zeros.

This witty allegory of 1848 is one of Weerth's most considerable achievements, for it operates on several levels and answers definitively the question indirectly posed in the Fragment: that of the upper middle class's rôle in a revolution. What Preiss witnesses is a movement towards political and social change, but he himself remains primarily conscious of the fact that the figures are those of his account book, which will show a severe loss if the zeros are overthrown, and so, like most members of the property-owning class in 1848, he sees the Revolution only as a personal threat: "Der Herr Preiss erkannte nämlich gar nicht die welthistorische Bedeutung seines Traumes. In der Empörung der Zahlen gegen die Nullen seines Kapitalkontos sah er einzig und allein eine Gefährdung seiner kommerziellen Interessen."⁷³ The impending digital attack on the zeros fills him with reactionary impulses, and just before the moment of popular triumph he manages to wake up - appropriately, for a continuation along the lines projected would cause the allegory to lose its connection with the historical events of 1848.

Thus the dream points to the political impetus which, in the first months of 1848, appeared to be leading to change of a social nature, and simultaneously it illustrates the fearful reaction of one who desires above all to protect his own interests. Instead of demonstrating solidarity with the digits, who are "schlichte, biedere Staatsbürger" like himself,⁷⁴

73. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 464.

74. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 458.

Preiss aligns himself with the zeros. When he awakes, the black-red-gold tricolor outside his window no longer worries him, for he has found his own solution.

In the following chapter, however, he has to deal first with a manifestation of revolutionary fervour from within his own ranks. The appearance of the sober accountant Lenz as an armed 'citizens' guard' allows Weerth to comment indirectly on the arming of the middle class in March 1848. At the time it was considered to be an important concession extracted from the king, but Weerth is aware of its ridiculous aspects.⁷⁵ Initially Preiss fears the force represented by Lenz in his new guise, but the offer of an increase in salary immediately causes Lenz to forget any radical notions induced by his weaponry, and his acceptance exposes him as just another bourgeois philistine of Preiss's ilk, ready to betray an honourable cause for personal advantage.

A momentary setback safely overcome, Preiss demonstrates the single-mindedness which is the legacy of his dream; after considering the most profitable ventures of the present moment, he initiates a speculation in ammunition.⁷⁶ While new customers are awaited, Weerth marks time by reproducing another conversation between Preiss and his lieutenant, in which they discuss the new republican government in Paris. The fact that it included a poet, a journalist and a worker gives Preiss the chance to voice once more his antipathy towards any kind of revolution. In Preiss's eyes, a poet is a fool, a journalist

⁷⁵He describes Lenz as a "Coopersche (...) Nordamerikaner" (Vol. II, p.467). Fontane, who was armed in the March days, reports similarly disparagingly on his own ineptitude and the futility of the situation. (See p. 91 above.) Stadelmann notes in his history of 1848 (p. 186) that the proprietors of Berlin gunshops lent weapons to prospective citizen guards on the understanding that they would be returned after any battles, and that this promise was almost invariably honoured.

⁷⁶Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 475.

is dangerous, and the fact that an ordinary 'ouvrier' should enter a government makes him almost apoplectic. "Beschütze uns vor der blutroten Fahne,"⁷⁷ he prays.

Finally, Preiss receives official approval from the leaders of the reactionary forces to manufacture ammunition for use against the populace. In recognition of his services, claims Preiss, he is to be offered a post in a new government to restore order to the state. In a display of twisted thinking, he refers to his task as one of breaking a tyranny, and saving the fatherland by bringing it through the hurricane to a safe port. His identification of revolution with counter-revolution corresponds to his earlier equation of Christianity with capitalism. But in the final sentence, Weerth indicates that Preiss's philosophy has not yet triumphed, for that very night, his windows are smashed by a group of rough proletarians.

The laconic but significant conclusion to the Skizzen can profitably be contrasted with the bitterness of the equivalent passage in Schnapphahnski. The latter was composed in 1849 when the Reaction had already conquered, whereas the last words of the Skizzen appeared in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung of July 1848, a period of continued revolutionary optimism. Weerth, who ended his novel Schnapphahnski with the expression of finality: "Der Humor ist versiegt; das Buch ist zu Ende,"⁷⁸ gives the earlier work a more open conclusion. He allows for the possibility, frequently articulated by his editor Karl Marx, that the proletariat might yet demonstrate its strength and thereby prevent the triumph of the social type represented by Preiss. While the events of 1849 lead Weerth to admit that the species embodied in Schnapphahnski is immortal, he remains

⁷⁷. Georg Weerth, Vol. II, p. 481.

⁷⁸. Georg Weerth, Vol. IV, p. 488.

confident in 1848 that the counter-revolutionary force he satirises so successfully can still be turned aside. The proletarians who smash Preiss's windows represent in concrete form the red sunlight to which Weerth has referred several times in the preceding narrative, a stock symbol of revolutionary expectation. And so he has afforded the reader a glimpse of the utopia which should provide the basis for all satire. "Ex negativo,"⁷⁹ in the terminology of Arntzen, he has hinted unspecifically at a better future.

79. Helmut Arntzen, p. 17.

Conclusions to Part II

"Und das alles schwirrte, klirrte, schimmerte, flimmerte, flunkerte, klunkerte, phantasirte, manifestirte, proklamirte, haselirte, randalirte, pokulirte, toastirte, glorifizirte, katzenmusizirte über-, unter- und durcheinander."¹ These were the remarkable words used by Johannes Scherr to describe the vast throng of publications - political manifestos, caricatures, and satires - which followed upon the relaxation of censorship laws in March 1848. The volume of printed matter which appeared in those few months of liberty took the form mainly of pamphlets distributed in the street, and consequently proved to be of a purely ephemeral nature. A poem in praise of the Viennese university students who directed the March uprising from their 'Aula' was printed in an edition of 100,000 copies, circulated immediately among the population, and set to music in nineteen different versions.² In the bombastically patriotic and satirical clamour, it was difficult to separate the valuable from the worthless, and so Glaßbrenner's writings, for instance, which had been eagerly read by a 'Vormärz' public, became temporarily lost in the throng of similar publications in 1848. Any analysis of the satire of the Revolution must therefore limit its scope to a few examples, which may not indeed be representative of the total production, but which have demonstrated a certain merit to survive both Reaction and oblivion.

The satires of Prutz, Glaßbrenner and Weerth share the important and, in the 1840s, virtually universal characteristic of opposition to the existing political order. To some extent this may be true of all satire if it fulfils the functions described in the introduction to Part II of this work, but

1. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 426.

2. Tim Klein, p. 134; J. G. Legge, p. 271.

the years preceding the Revolution were marked by increasing militancy, which is indirectly indicated by the fact that under 'Vormärz' or post-revolutionary régimes, Prutz was placed on trial charged with 'Majestätsbeleidigung', Glaßbrenner was expelled from his native Berlin, and Weerth was imprisoned for three months. This was the price to be paid for exercising the critical faculty inherent in the satirical genre.

A study of selected satire within a restricted period of the 1840s proves to be particularly rewarding, because the explicit or implicit contrast between contemporary reality and the satirists' ideal is reflected in the actual events of the period. For a few months in 1848, the ideal became reality for those writers who had attacked the façade of absolutism. And yet the realisation of that ideal, temporary as it was, caused new problems; as we have seen, the sudden disappearance of the target often causes the militant writer to lose his artistic balance, and Glaßbrenner, in tacit recognition of Faust's prescription for salvation, admits that it is easier to strive towards freedom than to operate within it.³ Prutz too, whose Wochenstube reveals a depth of anti-absolutist militancy, quickly becomes disillusioned with the aimless conduct of the Revolution in Berlin and accepts the necessity for a continuation of the monarchy.⁴ Only Weerth, in Humoristische Skizzen aus dem deutschen Handelsleben, makes a fully convincing transition from 'Vormärz' reality to the ideal represented by the first months of 1848, and this success may be attributed partially to his ideological certainty.

In most cases, the ending of the ideal and the return to previous political reality presented too great a problem

3. See p. 124 above.

4. See pp. 66-7 above.

of re-adjustment for satirical writers. Not only did the renewed repression epitomised in the Black Book of the Reaction, which named both Scherr and Glaßbrenner, among more than 6,000 others, as dangerous characters worthy of special police attention, bring even greater censorship difficulties than those of the 'Vormärz', but the general post-revolutionary disillusionment caused satirists to fall silent or attempt a new means of expression. Glaßbrenner turned to children's literature and relatively innocuous commentaries on contemporary affairs, while Prutz abandoned political drama in the Aristophanes tradition in favour of novels. Weerth left Europe. In a letter to Marx in 1851, he complains: "Die Revolution hat mich um alle Ruhe, um alle Heiterkeit gebracht,"⁵ a fact which is also apparent in the conclusion to Schnapphahnski. Since "Heiterkeit" had been an essential element in his satires, its loss during the Reaction constitutes a greater obstacle to renewed literary efforts than the re-established laws of censorship. In another letter to Marx a few months later, he confirms the fact that the Revolution has marked the end of his satirical 'oeuvre': "Denn ich sehe keinen Zweck, kein Ziel bei der Schriftstellerei. Wenn Du etwas über Nationalökonomie schreibst, so hat das Sinn und Verstand. Aber ich? Dürftige Witze, schlechte Späße reißen, um den vaterländischen Fratzen ein blödes Lächeln abzulocken - wahrhaftig, ich kenne nichts Erbärmlicheres!"⁶ Other expressions of similar disillusion, and the variety of reasons for it, will be treated in Part III, the section dealing with retrospective attitudes towards the events of 1848, as found in post-revolutionary writings.

5. Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 391.

6. Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 403.

PART III
REACTIONS TO THE REACTION,
ILLUSTRATED IN THEORETICAL WORKS
BY ROBERT PRUTZ AND JOHANNES SCHERR.

It has become repeatedly apparent in the course of the preceding chapters that the outcome of the 1848 Revolution was a severe disappointment to the four writers we have examined. As a result of their radical tendencies, the process of post-revolutionary disillusionment becomes intensified, especially when viewed against the historical background of increasing 'Vormärz' expectation and enthusiasm. The military occupation of Berlin and Vienna, the imposition of constitutions, the re-assertion of absolutist power and the political persecution typified in the Black Book of the Reaction combined to force those writers who had articulated their opposition to absolutism during the 'Vormärz' and March Revolution to come to terms with the political reality of the 'Nachmärz' era. There were several possible solutions.

Superficially, emigration offered the simplest solution. Some had no choice but to flee from Germany in order to avoid imprisonment. The radical deputy in the Württemberg Parliament, Johannes Scherr, escaped a fifteen-year prison sentence by fleeing to Switzerland, while, among many others, Karl Schürz emigrated to the United States, Karl Marx to France and Georg Weerth to Latin America. They found safety but not necessarily satisfaction. Scherr, newly arrived in Zürich, recalled the words of Dante on the subject of exile:

"Du wirst alsdann verlassen alle Dinge,
Die dir die liebsten sind; dies wird der erste
Pfeil sein, den der Verbannung Bogen abschnellt.
Du wirst dann merken, wie nach Salze schmecke
Das fremde Brot und welch' ein harter Gang ist
Das Auf- und Niedersteigen fremder Treppen."¹

1. Johannes Scherr, Eine deutsche Geschichte. Zürich, G. Kiesling, 1850, p. 4.

However, he dismisses as a cruel and stupid lie any notion that it is preferable to breathe the air of a German prison cell than the mountain air of a foreign country.² When the only alternative to flight lay in submission to a hostile system of justice, emigration could be seen as an honourable solution, freeing the exile, so long as he chose his host nation judiciously, from the necessity of curbing or compromising his beliefs. But, apart from the fact that revolutionary views of 1848 vintage became both chronologically and spatially irrelevant in the Switzerland and America of the 1850s and 1860s, the emigrés' disillusion with Germany silenced them more effectively than any censorship laws. In South America, Georg Weerth produced no literary works after the Revolution, and we shall see that in Switzerland, Scherr's later ideological development was one of increasing conservatism and pessimism.

A second solution to the problem of resurgent absolutism was voluntary submission, silence and resignation within the existing order. Occasionally it can be difficult to judge the extent to which the silence of certain authors is voluntary, and thus an honourable decision to avoid compromise with the 'ancien régime', or resultant from coercion. In the post-revolutionary era, silence is open to speculation and possible misinterpretation. Writing of Weerth's silence after 1848, Dietrich Allert claims: "Ohne seinen kommunistischen Idealen untreu zu werden, hätte er nichts mehr veröffentlichen können, und deshalb schwieg er. Literatur war ihm Waffe, und er mißbrauchte sie nicht."³ As long as Weerth stayed in Germany, it was impossible to judge whether or not this was the case, but the fact that no literary renewal accompanied his emigration

2. Johannes Scherr, pp. 5-6.

3. Dietrich Allert, p. 326.

throws some doubt on Allert's idealistic portrayal of his motives. Abroad he could have continued to write in accordance with his communist beliefs, as did Marx and Engels, but he preferred to wait.⁴ A minor writer named Karl Frenzel describes in detail the disillusion which prompted widespread authorial resignation. By contrast with the previous year, life in 1849 was "farblos und duftlos." "Dahin war der Geist und die Freiheit; das Phlegma und die Philisterhaftigkeit waren geblieben."⁵ For him the possibility of a literary career as editor of a radical paper was suddenly removed, and he saw no solution other than silence.

The third method of adjustment to the Reaction, for those who chose to remain in Germany, was that of realism, or modifying one's writings to suit the more oppressive conditions of the 1850s. A more moderate approach to political questions, as evinced by many literary survivors of the Revolution, can be just as difficult to evaluate as the silence of others. To what extent is a move away from political 'engagement' towards conservatism and a neo-romantic preoccupation with nature an indication of genuine disillusion with previous themes, and how far is it based on prudent consideration of personal risk? Did the writers of the 'Nachmärz' era damn the Revolution as a sycophantic gesture of submission to the absolutist rulers they had previously castigated, or did they express a universal attitude towards "das tolle Jahr"?

Emigration and silence present limited possibilities for fruitful analysis, but the third alternative, the re-appraisal of the Revolution, is well documented and can be examined.

4. Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 484: "Ich werde dann die erste Liebhaberei meiner Jugend, die Literatur, wieder aufnehmen" (i.e. after his eventual return to Europe).

5. Karl Frenzel, Erinnerungen und Strömungen. Leipzig, Wilhelm Friedrich, n.d., p. 29.

In the following pages we shall look at some of the post-revolutionary writings of Robert Prutz, specifically those which discuss contemporary literature. Although Prutz himself ignores his own authorial activity in all these treatises, we shall continue to bear in mind his Politische Wochenstube and Engelchen in conjunction with his general statements on revolutionary and 'Nachmärz' literature, thus seeking to establish the degree to which hindsight, negative experience and increasing conservatism can lead to the renunciation of an earlier literary standpoint. Then we shall extend similar treatment to Johannes Scherr's history of the Revolution, Von Achtundvierzig bis Einundfünfzig, illustrating the fact that an alienation process can occur in the treatment of political events as well as literature. Admittedly, Scherr was an emigré, but the chastened and conservative tone of his Zürich publications parallels that of writers who remained in Germany. He too makes no mention of his own rôle, either political or literary, during the Revolution, but we shall use his Deutsche Geschichte as a yardstick to measure the extent to which his emotive historical account of the events of 1848 constitutes a rejection of his earlier stance. It should be possible finally to evaluate, in the light of these 'Nachmärz' publications, the importance of 1848 as a literary watershed.

Chapter One : Post-revolutionary evaluation of the state of literature

I

Contemporary critics and 'Nachmärz' literature

"Es wird eine Zeit der Helden sein
Nach der Zeit der Schreier und Schreiber."
Hellmuth von Moltke

After the Revolution, both authors and critics were not slow to point out the weaknesses and evaluate the strengths of the literature which had been produced under the liberated conditions of 1848. With the benefit of hindsight they could then contrast it with the chastened works which emerged during the ensuing years. In order to avoid the impression that Robert Prutz, with whom we shall be primarily concerned in the present chapter, may have been alone in his systematic condemnation of revolutionary literature, let us first sketch the views of some other contemporaries who also delivered judgements of a mainly critical nature.

Throughout 1848, the conservative Adalbert Stifter, who has been described along with Grillparzer and Feuchtersleben as one of the "Unzeitgemäßen des Jahres 1848,"¹ lamented the disruption of security caused by the Revolution, claiming: "Selbst Tod ist süß, als so ein Leben."² In letters to his friend Gustav Heckenast, he calls for the destruction of present "Schandliteratur" and the restoration of the Goddess of Beauty to literature. "Geschähe das nicht," he warns, "so wären wir alle ohnehin verloren, und das Proletariat würde, wie ein anderer Hunnenzug, über den Trümmern der Muse- und Gottheits-tempeln in trauriger Entmenschung prangen."³ To an aesthete

1. Wilhelm Bietak, 'Die Unzeitgemäßen des Jahres 1848'. In: DVLG XXIV, 1950, p. 243.

2. Adalbert Stifter, Sämtliche Werke Vol. XVII. Ed. Gustav Wilhelm Reichenberg, Sudeten-deutscher Verlag Harz Kraus, 1929-1941, p. 322.

3. Adalbert Stifter, Vol. XVII, p. 304.

the lack of moderation evident in the conduct of both sides in the Revolution is a source of despair, not of literary inspiration, for the latter can be nurtured only in an atmosphere of inner and external harmony. In 1849 he complains: "Ich habe in diesem Jahre Gefühle kennengelernt, von denen ich früher keine Ahnung hatte. Alles Schöne, Große, Menschliche war dahin, das Gemüth war zerrüttet, die Poesie gewichen."⁴ Only when the previous reactionary order to which he has been accustomed is restored can the stream of German literature return to its former channels.

Stifter's reaction to the literature of 1848 is an extreme one, based on his idealistic conception of the author's rôle. By contrast, Ferdinand Kürnberger, a contemporary critic and later author of Der Amerikamüde, viewed the literary effect of 1848 in positive terms, in that it appeared to strip away the excrescences of Romanticism. The fact that the latter influences had remained for so long, particularly in the lyric, were traced by Kürnberger to the attitude of introversion hitherto constrained upon the German author by the exigencies of the absolutist system under which he lived. Now that those bonds had been broken, claims Kürnberger, writing in mid-1848, a fact which excuses his apparently naive optimism, a literary renewal was at hand. "Wer hat ein Auge für den heranrührenden Frühling des Feldes, wenn der Hauch der Jugend über Völker und Nationen fliegt?"⁵ he asks rhetorically.

However, in a later article entitled 'Die Poesie und die Freiheit', he reflects more deeply on the subject matter of the works currently appearing, and realises that the liberation of

4. Adalbert Stifter, Vol. XVIII, p. 11.

5. Ferdinand Kürnberger, Gesammelte Werke Vol. II. Ed. Otto Erich Deutsch. Munich & Leipzig, Georg Müller, 1911, p.361.

literature has made its praise of freedom somewhat irrelevant. In response to the wave of 1848 freedom poems, he points out that the possession of freedom is an essentially unpoetic subject: "Die Freiheit ist (...) ein satter Magen. Sie ist Befriedigung, Erfüllung, Ergänzung, Vollständigkeit. Es ist kein Affekt, kein Pathos, keine Leidenschaft in ihr - es ist darum kein poetisches Element in ihr,"⁶ and concludes that a declaration of love for freedom matches the profundity of claiming to love breathing, for freedom is no more than unhindered intellectual respiration.

Similarly, another literary critic Hermann Hettner questions the subject matter of revolutionary writings, pointing out that excessive tendentiousness produces a literature which is "altklug und frühreif."⁷ But unlike Stifter, he expresses a willingness to accept the imperfections of the new literature as long as it remains close to contemporary history, and to await a Golden Age which may overshadow that of Goethe and Schiller once the political crises have been positively resolved. Hettner's severest criticism is reserved for contemporary drama of the type epitomised by Die politische Wochentube, with its hollow rhetoric, superficial characterisation and self-preoccupation. These features are to some extent positively balanced by an aggressiveness which he nonetheless regards as deficient in aesthetic qualities: "Neu und wahrhaft aus dem tiefsten Selbst der eigenen Zeit heraus geboren ist nur ihre soziale und politische Tendenz, die ihrem Inhalte nach zwar ein Fortschritt ist, aber künstlerisch solange unberechtigt

6. Ferdinand Kürnberger, p. 415.

7. Hermann Hettner, 'Schriften zur Literatur'. In: Hettner, Die romantische Schule in ihrem inneren Zusammenhange mit Goethe und Schiller. Berlin, Aufbau, 1959, p. 164.

bleibt, als sie eben äußerliche Tendenz ist und nicht völlig in der zwecklosen Unbefangenheit echter Kunstschönheit aufgeht!"⁸

Friedrich Hebbel's experience of the Revolution bears comparison with Stifter's, although they disagreed in basic philosophy, for they were both established authors, both conservative and both resident in Austria. Hebbel found that the events of 1848 hindered his literary composition, at least in the early stages, but he accepted the situation more willingly. "Wer kann während eines Erdbebens malen?" he asked his friend Felix Bamberg, "Und wer kann das Erdbeben malen?"⁹ In November, however, during the siege which culminated in Jellachich's occupation of Vienna and the installation of the reactionary Schwarzenberg ministry, he reported that he spent his time writing the last Act of his tragic drama Herodes und Mariamne, not inside his house, but out on the streets, "und die Hauptszene während der letzten Kanonade, die übrigens mit außerordentlicher Virtuosität exekutiert wurde."¹⁰ Apart from this purely external relationship between his literary production and the Revolution, Hebbel criticises the general standard of contemporary writers. With the relaxation of censorship, literature had suddenly become, in his opinion, a kind of depository for the intellectual proletariat, whose qualifications to practise no longer included talent or knowledge but merely hunger and impecuniousness.¹¹ Such a state could not last, he believed.

Even more interesting than contemporary critics' judgement of the literature of 1848 is their attitude towards post-

8. Hermann Hettner, p. 164.

9. Friedrich Hebbel, Vol. V, p. 667. The answer to the second question would be: Heinrich von Kleist.

10. Friedrich Hebbel, Vol. V, p. 675.

11. Friedrich Hebbel, Sämtliche Werke Vol. IV. Ed. Richard Maria Werner. Berlin, B. Behrs Verlag, 1906, p. 137.

revolutionary works and the literature of the future. Most seem to predict a process of gradual improvement, either, in the conservative view, by contrast with the degradation of 1848, or, in the optimists' view, as a consequence of the new literary direction plotted by the Revolution. From his vantage point in the mid-1850s, Robert Prutz, as we shall see, reports unfavourably on progress in this direction, but those who wrote in close chronological proximity to 1848 could imagine only upward progress. For Stifter, the muses could return once Austria was "secured", while Hettner expresses confidence in a literary future based on the political gains of March. It seems that the 1850s brought greater vindication of the former goal than of the latter, as literature conformed to the new conservatism of absolutist régimes. Bearing in mind the philosophical difference between Weerth's pre-revolutionary Fragment and Prutz's Engelchen of 1851, one can appreciate the statement of Ludwig Pietsch, social chronicler of the 1850s, on the subject of 'Nachmärz' writing: "Die vor allem Lärm der Tagesleiden-schaften des Not- und Zorneschreis der Besiegten, Verfolgten, Gequälten, Unterdrückten sicher geschützte, so lange gemieden und verlacht gewesene Welt der Romantik kam wieder zu Ehren."¹²

Alexander von Ungern-Sternberg, a 'jungdeutsch' survivor, commented with acidity on the vacuity and harmlessness of 'Nachmärz' writings, describing them as "Produktionen, die eine schwächliche, süßliche pietistisch-absolutistische Farbe an sich tragen."¹³ Richard Wagner on the other hand, in his 1849 article 'Die Kunst und die Revolution', accords special importance to revolution as a means of purifying art. "Der starke und

12. Ludwig Pietsch, Erinnerungen aus den Fünfziger Jahren. Berlin, F. Fontane & Co., 1893, p. 161.

13. Alexander von Ungern-Sternberg, Ein Carneval in Berlin. Bremen, Schlodtmann, 1849, p. 118.

schöne Mensch" must be the ultimate goal of artistic portrayal. "Die Revolution gebe ihm die Stärke, die Kunst die Schönheit,"¹⁴ he insists. Thus, despite his own chastening experience in the abortive Dresden uprising of May 1849, he does not utterly condemn the literary influence of the Revolution, but incorporates it into the structure of his aesthetic theories.

II

Robert Prutz and 'Nachmärz' literature

"In Frankreich hat die Revolution ihre Kinder verschlungen, in Deutschland die Kinder die Revolution."
Georg Herwegh

"Der plötzliche und rasche Aufschwung jenes verhängnisvollen März war gleichsam ein poetischer Rausch gewesen, eine jener phantastischen Anwandlungen, wie Poeten und Künstler denselben ausgesetzt sind, und nachdem der Rausch jetzt verflogen, o Himmel, wie niederschlagend, wie beschämend war jetzt der Katzenjammer!"¹⁵ These words form an almost perfect summary of Prutz's hostile attitude towards the literary legacy of the Revolution, and reflect the emotion of one who could not escape the general reaction against a historical event which demonstrated the helplessness of the liberal middle class in a confrontation with the conservative order.

In view of the expectation evident in Die politische Wochenstube, Prutz's conduct, even during the first months of revolutionary enthusiasm, seems unusually subdued. In the Constitutional Club of Berlin he delivered moderate speeches and edited a small newspaper, but soon withdrew completely. Perhaps somewhat earlier than his contemporaries he recognised

14. Richard Wagner, Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen Vol. III. Leipzig, Siegels Musikalienhandlung, 1907, p. 32.

15. Robert Prutz, Schriften zur Literatur und Politik. Ed. Bernd Hüppauf. Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1973, p. 56.

that the liberal 'Germania' he had portrayed in his 'Vormärz' drama as the saviour of the nation, the bearer of the joint prizes of unity and freedom, could not be achieved in the type of revolution he was witnessing. But the known facts of the Revolution's collapse did not constitute the sole source of his disillusionment. In 1849 he was appointed to the professorship of literary history at the University of Halle, but as a result of his 'Vormärz' radical reputation, he was treated with suspicion. Ostracised by conservative fellow-academics and deprived of students who feared destruction of their future prospects if they attended his lectures, he eventually resigned and withdrew to the comparative peace of an intellectual backwater, his home town of Stettin.¹⁶ The fact, already demonstrated several times in the present work, that Prutz was far from radical and possessed no plans for social reorganisation, indicates the harshness of post-revolutionary realignment with absolutism. When one observes the increasingly conservative tone of the theoretical writings he produced during the years of his academic persecution, one wonders what his enemies had to fear.

Furthermore, his reputation as an adherent of Young Hegelianism became steadily less justified. In accordance with its philosophy he contrasted true being with mere existence: "Unsere Sache ist es, in unseren Armen ruht es, diese falsche Existenz durch ein wahrhaftes Sein zu vernichten,"¹⁷ but he diverged from it in his belief that nationality, or the movement towards a united Germany, must form the basis for achieving liberty. The degrees of radicalism possible within Young

16. For biographical details see Bernd Hüppauf, in: Robert Prutz, p. XVIII, or Werner Spilker, pp. 10-11.

17. Robert Prutz, p. XV.

Hegelianism were later pointed out by Engels, who wrote: "Wer das Hauptgewicht auf das System Hegels legte, konnte (...) ziemlich konservativ sein; wer in der dialektischen Methode die Hauptsache sah, konnte religiös wie politisch zur äußersten Opposition gehören."¹⁸ After the Revolution Prutz moved closer and closer to the former category.

In his analysis of Prutz's philosophy of literary history, Bernd Hüppauf names Ludwig Feuerbach as his principal inspiration. According to Hüppauf, the concept of "Sein" as a prerequisite for "Denken" is adopted in a political sense, with the result that Prutz attributes the characteristics of literary movements to the political systems within which they evolved. Hüppauf describes this phenomenon as "Literatur als Reflex, als objektiviertes Selbstbewußtsein der politischen Wirklichkeit,"¹⁹ but adds the important proviso that Prutz's theory does not necessarily imply a mechanical or predetermined process of literary production, and he quotes Prutz's criticism of the Young Germans to demonstrate the possibility of transcending political realities: "Ihre Schuld ist es nur, daß sie die Schuld der Zeit nicht von sich abgewendet haben. Denn nicht bloß mit der Zeit, auch gegen die Zeit an führt ein Weg der Freiheit und des Fortschritts."²⁰ Essentially Prutz adopts the same attitude towards 1848 and its aftermath. Although the power of conflicting political forces in the revolutionary period was even greater than during the Young German era, Prutz cannot excuse the writers of the time for failing to rise above the events around them. Because he disagreed with the conduct of the Revolution, he therefore necessarily disagreed with the

18. Friedrich Engels, Vol. XXI, p. 270.

19. Bernd Hüppauf, in: Robert Prutz, p. XXVI.

20. Robert Prutz, p. 51.

"Literatur als Reflex" that it produced. This fact constitutes a useful initial premise for an examination of some of his post-revolutionary theoretical writings, and a consideration of whether his novel Das Engelchen in fact corresponded to the mental attitude he apparently demanded.

a. 'Deutschlands Einheit und die deutsche Literatur'

Prutz's Neue Schriften of 1854 contain two articles of special interest, 'Deutschlands Einheit und die deutsche Literatur' and 'Epos und Drama in der deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart'. The former illustrates precisely the theory discussed above, as it proceeds from the assumption that the failure of attempts to achieve political unity has had a correspondingly depressive effect on the state of German literature.²¹ He begins by describing post-revolutionary disillusionment with unification plans, claiming that all interest and enthusiasm have disappeared, to be replaced by a reluctance even to discuss what has become a painful subject: "Im Hause des Gehängten soll man nicht vom Stricke sprechen."²² Prutz assumes that experiments with German unity have reached an end, implicitly agreeing with Metternich's definition of Germany as a mere geographical concept, and he expresses satisfaction with the modest trade and customs arrangements which constitute a kind of 'ersatz' unity. It is ironic that this view echoes that of Goethe in 1828, when he expressed doubts about the creation of "eine einzige große Residenz," for he could already send his

21. Throughout his theoretical writings, Prutz generalises on the depressed state of 'Nachmärz' literature. Reference to the nineteenth century literary timeline drawn up by Fritz Martini (pp. 1*-31*) indicates that the 1850s were in fact a fairly unproductive period. Apart from the works of Wagner and Hebbel, there were no major dramas. Keller's Der grüne Heinrich and Freytag's Soll und Haben were virtually the only novels likely to stand the test of time. Only in the fields of the lyric and the 'Novelle' were there more than a few works of importance: e.g. poems by Fontane, Hebbel, Heine and Storm; 'Novellen' by Keller, Tieck and Raabe.

22. Robert Prutz, Neue Schriften. Halle, Schwetschke, 1854, p.3.

suitcase unopened through thirty-six [sic] German states, and with this situation he declared himself content.²³ Prutz at first expresses no personal opinion on this argument, but uses it as a justification for his own main thesis, that the sudden change of political direction in German society has removed the ground from beneath the feet of writers who explored in literary terms the 'Vormärz' problems of 'Einheit und Freiheit'. With the disappearance of their subject matter, which Prutz describes disparagingly as "Wolkendunst und Morgennebel" and later as a swallow's nest constructed from remnants of worthless rubbish,²⁴ these writers find themselves at a loss for words.

Although Prutz proceeds to trace sympathetically the history of unification motifs in German literature, his initial remarks constitute a telling indictment of the theories he expressed in Die politische Wochenstube. As we shall see again in the case of Scherr, the 'Nachmärz' commentator rarely takes into account what he himself may have said or done in the period he dissects. The selective amnesia evinced by Prutz and Scherr serves as an instructive illustration of the spiritual, as well as political and literary cataclysm brought about by the events of 1848. Only writers of the strictest intellectual honesty, such as Fontane, whose comments on his own revolutionary rôle have been mentioned in a previous chapter, or the outside observer Heine, could bridge the gap between present disillusion and past enthusiasm.

After an extensive treatment of the history of unification ideas, Prutz modifies his original stance by sanctioning the movement towards German unity as long as it is removed from the pages of novels or poems and is allowed to develop in practical

23. Quoted by Tim Klein, p. 35.

24. Robert Prutz, p. 5.

ways. To the 'Zollverein', the inner German post and telegraph conventions, industrial exhibitions and organisations of professional men he gives greater credit for advancing the cause than to political poems: "Der Gedanke der Einheit (...) ist aus der poetischen Abstraction herausgetreten ins Leben; er wird Geld, wird Absatz, wird Wissenschaft."²⁵ In 1848 such a view would have been considered philistine, the type of remark Weerth might have placed in the mouth of his merchant Herr Preiss, but in the 'Nachmärz' era it could emanate even from the author of Die politische Wochenstube. He contrasts healthy practicality with the allegedly romantic or medieval form of unity personified in the hereditary Kaiser, as promoted by the 'Burschenschaft', the Frankfurt Parliament and, according to Prutz's generalisation, the literature of the Revolution. The appointment of Archduke Johann to a mythical Regency and the National Assembly's offer of an imperial crown to Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia apparently provide the catalyst for Prutz's denunciation of anachronistic solutions to political problems,²⁶ a stance which accords strangely with the answers offered by the novelist Prutz in Das Engelchen.

In a further step forward into generalisation, Prutz attributes the absolute failure of the 1848 Revolution to its adoption of a doomed cause - the restoration of the Holy Roman Empire. Thus we observe a 'Nachmärz' phenomenon related to the selective amnesia noted earlier, and one which will recur in the works of Scherr: the distillation of past revolutionary experience, with its cacophony of opposing forces, into an uncomplicated movement conveniently illustrating the theory invented by the analyst. Because Prutz was not a historian, it

25. Robert Prutz, p. 51.

26. Robert Prutz, pp. 54-5.

is perhaps unfair to criticise his lack of an objective approach, but even as a literary historian, he makes sweeping judgements of only partial validity.

He sees the transition from 1848 to the 1850s as being characterised by a detestation of unification and its literary expression: "Die Liebe ist in Grimm, die Wehmuth in Hohn, die Sehnsucht in Schadenfreude, der Schmerz in Selbstverspottung umgeschlagen."²⁷ And yet the idea, as its practical manifestations indicate, is considered by Prutz to be a healthy one, in spite of its unfavourable reputation in the post-revolutionary era. Again he points to the tangible results of modest efforts towards commercial co-operation as a guide for the future. Beyond this readily visible evidence, he can see no prospect other than a fatalistic type of evolution: "Wenn die Zeit gekommen, wird aus den erfüllten Bedingungen des Wesens sich die Form von selbst in organischer Nothwendigkeit ergeben."²⁸ These words represent merely a recipe for quiescence. It becomes increasingly apparent that the collapse of liberal aims in 1848 brought about the virtual ideological bankruptcy of Prutz and his comrades, so that articles such as 'Deutschlands Einheit und die deutsche Literatur', in which he combines reflection on his own field with attempts at political prognostication of Germany's future, emerge as only partially convincing attempts to rationalise that defeat. Weerth's laconic admission: "An Revolutionen in Deutschland glaube ich nun einmal nicht,"²⁹ although negative, represents a more realistic and perhaps more honest approach to 'Nachmärz' conditions than the verbose treatises of Prutz.

27. Robert Prutz, p. 56.

28. Robert Prutz, p. 59.

29. Georg Weerth, Vol. V, p. 359.

Finally he turns to the rôle of literature, which for so long has nurtured the idea of German unity, and which now must continue to lead the way in a positive and even materialist fashion. His words constitute a manifesto of realism in reaction against the romanticism which he identifies with 1848: "Wir wollen das Auge nicht mehr sehnsüchtig in die Ferne gerichtet halten, aber wir wollen dafür die Steine, die uns im Wege liegen, desto aufmerksamer prüfen und desto sorgfältiger hinwegräumen."³⁰ Because Prutz wrote this declaration soon after completing Das Engelchen, it would not be unreasonable to assume that his call for realism, for treatment of all social classes and landscapes, for renunciation of what he terms medieval splendour, for analysis of customs, opinions and interests, combined with suggestions for possible synthesis, should already be reflected in the novel. "Schildert uns denn, Ihr Poeten, das Land und das Volk, wie es ist!"³¹ he demands, in an apparent echo of the realistic manifesto propounded by Georg Büchner.³² The pages of Prutz's novel, however, as we have seen in Part I, reveal a combination of what he praises and what he condemns. The evocation of the weavers' plight demonstrates a readiness to portray a social group in a realistic manner, while the breadth of his social portraiture fulfils his prescription of universality. But the convoluted plot, with its stereotyped conventions of false wills, stolen plans, substituted children, smuggling, deception, fire and murder, approaches the romanticism he allegedly eschewed. Furthermore, the anachronistic conclusion, while it may possibly represent Prutz's synthesis of

30. Robert Prutz, p. 61.

31. Robert Prutz, p. 60.

32. Georg Büchner, Werke und Briefe. Ed. Fritz Bergemann. Leipzig, Insel-Verlag, 1949, p. 227: "Ich betrachte mein Drama wie ein geschichtliches Gemälde, das seinem Original gleichen muß."

diverging social interests, hardly matches the challenge he issues in his article, which concludes that German unity must be built on a literature contributing to self-knowledge and mutual understanding among the people. In terms of Prutz's own theory of the close bond between literature and political systems, one may conclude that his uncertain view of the ultimate political good contributed to the equivocal impact and direction of his own literary production.

b. 'Epos und Drama in der deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart'

In this later chapter of the Neue Schriften, Prutz deals more specifically with literature and its current state. Again his starting-point is the negative influence of 1848, which has proved to be a disappointment not only for politicians but also for those who hoped that a new aesthetic and literary impulse would emerge from the turmoil. This was to be the opportunity, at least in Prutz's conception of current aesthetics, for the base of German literature to be extended beyond the field of lyrical poetry, in which it already excelled, to the unconquered realms of the epic.³³ According to Prutz, it was commonly believed that the German lack of a latter-day epic resulted from the fact that the nation had never experienced a revolution: "Das praktische Leben, sagte man uns, müsse erst neuerdings in Fluß gerathen, der Baum der Freiheit erst Knospen treiben, so werde auch die Blüthe unserer Dichtung sich in neuer und ungeahnter Herrlichkeit entfalten."³⁴ But the expected consequences did not ensue, and he considers present-day literature to be as trivial as in the pre-revolutionary period.

His judgement of the literature of the 1850s is a harsh

33. Robert Prutz, pp. 175-80.

34. Robert Prutz, p. 180.

one. He criticises its return to idyllic themes, its disregard for the humanistic realism to which he himself professedly adheres, the harmless sentimentality of its tone and its lack of action, all of which he regards as remnants of the old Romantic movement. That a Revolution of such apparent force could produce only a resurgence of the former 'bête noire' of both the 'Jungdeutschland' and 'Vormärz' writers fills Prutz the theoretician, as opposed to Prutz the novelist, with amazement. However, he realises that his own chronological perspective may have prevented him from appreciating the long-term literary consequences.³⁵

In accordance with his vision of a bond between literature and political systems, one which only a great literature may transcend, he fears that the political passivity of 'Nachmärz' Germany may well presage a similar fate for German literature. In an attempt to establish the likely trends of the future, he examines more closely the traditions of narrative poetry and drama. Within the context of his earlier 'Vormärz' oeuvre, the latter genre provides a clear indication of the hiatus created by 1848, as virtually all his negative remarks could apply directly to his own attempts in this field. After a period of frenetic activity in the 1830s and 1840s, he points out, drama has become a neglected and discredited field. Because it was associated with the movements culminating in the Revolution, the collapse of those movements led to public rejection of any literary form associated with them.

Prutz perceives a further reason for the failure of dramas in the style of Die politische Wochenstube and Die Wände. They were obviously intended more for a well-educated reader

35. Robert Prutz, p. 183.

than for a general theatre audience, and Prutz now realises that such an approach constitutes a distortion of an essential facet of dramatic writing. He recognises "daß das Drama (...) sein wahres und volles Dasein erst in dem Augenblick erhält, wo es vor der versammelten Menge leibhaft in Scene geht."³⁶

If 'Vormärz' drama failed because of its identification with a discredited literary cause and its lack of dramatic qualities, Prutz now sees little improvement in the style of writing which has succeeded it. The return to severe censorship has forced both playwrights and producers to stage only harmless works which sanction the existing anti-revolutionary political order. Thus he indicates a vicious circle of a public disillusioned with radical change, a ruling class implacably opposed to new ideas and a dramatic literature uncertain of its own rôle. Under current political conditions he envisages no means by which it might transcend the system repressing it, and so he seeks a solution in another literary genre.

As in his earlier article on literature and unity, Prutz names the novel as the form most appropriate to accomodating the difficulties of the age: "Wir werden vor allem in der episodischen Form des Romans ein bequemes Gefäß finden für den so vielfach auseinandergehenden, sich so vielfach durchkreuzenden Inhalt unserer Zeit."³⁷ A novel does not lend itself to the style of parliamentary speech practised by the dramatists of the 'Vormärz'. However, he admits the value of the 'Oppositionsliteratur' of that era, for it was the only available means by which views contrary to the régime could be expressed. After the actual liberty of the March days, the 'ersatz' satisfaction of theatrical declamation, even if it had been permitted,

³⁶.Robert Prutz, p. 193.

³⁷.Robert Prutz, p. 206.

would constitute a poor substitute; the theatre as a weapon was appropriate in a pre-revolutionary era, but not in an age of disillusionment.

Despite its extremely generalised nature, Prutz's analysis of contemporary drama represents a definite rejection of Die politische Wochenstube and his other pre-revolutionary dramatic works. He calls for dramatic characterisation instead of political masks, dialogue instead of rhetoric, objectivity instead of bias, and realism instead of abstraction. His manifesto stops short of demanding a separation of literature and politics, but inclines towards a vaguely humanistic realism as a balance to, and reaction against, recent political over-enthusiasm. Essentially, he looks for moderation in literature, not solely as a consequence of the humiliation of liberalism, or what Hüppauf describes in Marxist terms as "dies kleinbürgerliche Versöhnertum,"³⁸ but rather because each age seeks in its literature a quality which it does not yet possess itself and for which it strives.³⁹ In the 'Nachmärz' era, moderation and realism seem to Prutz to be the most desirable qualities. The leadership which has been so conspicuously lacking in German political life has naturally been reflected in the poor characterisation in literary works, and his final advice depends on the transformation of both fields: "Arbeite denn, wer die eine [a better literature] wünscht, daß das andere [an improvement in public personalities] nicht allzulange ausbleibt."⁴⁰ Again he postulates an interdependence of literature and history, without feeling capable of prescribing other than in gen-

38. Bernd Hüppauf, in: Robert Prutz, Schriften zur Literatur und Politik. Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1973, p. XXXVI.

39. Robert Prutz, Neue Schriften. Halle, G. Schwetschke'scher Verlag, 1854, p. 217.

40. Robert Prutz, p. 219.

eral terms how either is to be rescued from its present malaise.

Prutz's ideological uncertainty becomes even more apparent in the present article. While believing that literature must be related to the political base from which it arises, he castigates it for reasons emanating solely from this very political orientation, and his attempts at constructive suggestion for the future seem hesitant and tentative. He seeks a middle way as he writes, balancing criticism and sympathy in the manner of one who is basically unsure of his own stance. Prutz gives expression to a difficult period of expectancy, the age of "vorbei" and "noch nicht", when such a stance was all but universal. In a sense he speaks for those other literary survivors of 1848 who did not speak but demonstrated their uncertainty in a passive or implicit manner, through silence and resignation.

c. 'Die Literaturgeschichte und ihre Stellung zur Gegenwart'

Prutz's two-volume critical work Die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart, published five years after his Neue Schriften of 1854, contains two chapters which correspond closely to those just discussed. 'Die Literaturgeschichte und ihre Stellung zur Gegenwart' covers similar ground to 'Epos und Drama in der deutschen Literatur der Gegenwart', while 'Das Jahr 1848 und die deutsche Literatur' bears resemblances to the earlier work, 'Deutschlands Einheit und die deutsche Literatur'. The examination of two articles, which appear superficially to be mere reiterations of ideas whose coherence and validity we have already questioned, nevertheless provides a valuable indication of Prutz's modified hostility towards an event, now chronologically much more distant, which he believed responsible for the literary malaise of the preceding decade.

In the chapter devoted to literary history, he emphasises

the point stated earlier in the Neue Schriften, that in the post-Napoleonic era of severely restricted public expression, literature and its critical or documentary adjunct provided the only forum for the articulation of public aspirations, principally that of German unification. Therefore literature descended from an ivory tower of aestheticism to participate in everyday concerns. Prutz views with scepticism the efforts of the Young Germans to popularise literature,⁴¹ but admits "daß ohne Leidenschaft nichts Großes und Edles jemals durchgesetzt worden ist."⁴² The latter is an important statement of obvious application to 1848, which he now seems more willing to approach in a historical and less biased manner. He even accepts as necessary the destructive attitude of literary radicals towards their intellectual predecessors: "Der Boden, bestimmt eine neue Saat großzuziehen, mußte vor allem erst gereinigt werden."⁴³ Because the new militant literature and literary history had become public and popular, they took over a position in society inappropriate to their own true function; writers enjoyed the same prominence and appeared to wield the same influence as princes or kings. In that a writer's political affiliations appeared to receive greater attention than his literature, Prutz possessed evidence of his theory of the close identification of literature with political life.⁴⁴

The advent of the Revolution provides the turning point in Prutz's analysis. The upheaval predicted for so long by

41. See Theodor Mundt's claim: "Ich erkläre mit feierlicher Resignation, daß es eigentlich gar kein Buch ist, das ich herausgebe, sondern bloß ein Stück Leben." (Madonna. Leipzig, Gebrüder Reichenbach, 1835, p. 433)

42. Robert Prutz, Schriften zur Literatur und Politik. Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1973, p. 49. This edition reprints extracts from Die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart (Leipzig, 1859) among others.

43. Robert Prutz, p. 49.

44. Robert Prutz, p. 51. See also the dispute in the 1840s between Herwegh and Freiligrath over political loyalties.

writers and historians had come to pass, but its violence tended to overwhelm them. As Hebbel had pointed out, few people read books during a revolution, but the hope remained that in a new emergent political system, a literature of similarly new strength and content would be born. At this stage Prutz reaches the point from which his earlier Neue Schriften began: the universal disillusion brought about by 1848. Literary men had led the way through the 'Vormärz' and now must take the blame. The land of poets and thinkers had proved incapable of translating thoughts into deeds, and a revolution directed by men whose existence is based not on practicality but on imagination and well-meaning egoism cannot prevail. Stylistically as well as philosophically Prutz recaptures the hiatus caused by 1848, for the apparent logic of his previous discussion of the 1830s and early 1840s is abruptly destroyed in the moment his analysis reaches the shattering aftermath of the Revolution: "Hinweg denn mit der törichtesten Tradition, als ob wir jemals eine große klassische Literatur besessen hätten! Ja hinweg mit der Literatur überhaupt! Hat die Literatur uns die politische Einheit gebracht, deren wir so dringend bedürfen?"⁴⁵

Prutz transforms the chastening experience of the Revolution into a renewed appeal for sober literary realism, for faithful portrayal of the peasant's dung cart, the cobbler and the merchant.⁴⁶ In the Neue Schriften he considered this approach to be a positive prerequisite for the German people's self-knowledge, but in the present article it appears to serve a more penitential purpose. He draws a further salutary lesson from the classical era of German literature, which combined successfully an external form originating in Greece and Rome,

45. Robert Prutz, p. 57.

46. Robert Prutz, p. 58.

with a teutonic spirit, and produced new works of art in an atmosphere of harmony and moderation. The same process should be applied to the unhappy state of contemporary politics and literature, which have transcended classicism without having arrived at realism.⁴⁷

His tentative prescription for a modern classical age resembles his theories on the promotion of German unity; he advocates practicality, the study of ordinary life, history and economics as positive steps in that direction, but remains pessimistic about the present and the immediate future: "Diese glücklichere Epoche ist noch nicht da, wir leben noch in der Zeit der individuellen Leiden und Freuden, der patriotischen Sehnsucht, der nationalen Krankheit und Erniedrigung."⁴⁸ The passage of five years since his treatment of contemporary literature in the Neue Schriften has given him little more hope for an impending revival, and he concludes dismally that there must be certain periods of history whose nature is such that pure works of art cannot arise from them.

Either intentionally or by accident, Prutz has succeeded in recapturing the ruptured continuity of literary progress during the three decades he examines. After judging in at least partially sympathetic manner the increasing political orientation of 'jungdeutsch' and 'Vormärz' writers, he arrives at the Revolution almost by accident. Thereafter his comments become disjointed, confused, pessimistic, as if his line of argument had been disrupted in just the same way as the process he describes. He makes a steadily less definite distinction between literary documentation, the actual subject of his

47. In this connection it is interesting to note that the late nineteenth century period of Realism coincided with the Bismarck era of 'Realpolitik'.

48. Robert Prutz, p. 62.

article, and literature itself.

Although he inclines towards the reactionary solution of returning to the style of Goethe and Schiller, he also continues to regard an age of literary realism as the best panacea. To some extent his position merits sympathy, for he seeks solutions without the ability clearly to perceive them or even the objectivity to describe them. The following section will show more forcefully that he was a captive of the era he denounces; despite an awareness of its weaknesses and the passage of ten years since the Revolution, he still could not see beyond it.

d. 'Das Jahr 1848 und die deutsche Literatur'

In this final and perhaps definitive statement on a subject which had occupied him for a decade, Prutz moves away from the essentially negative tone of his earlier analyses and achieves the beginnings of a solution. The reason for his increasingly positive attitude towards 1848 can be traced not merely to the passage of time or to a desire for synthesis of a persistent problem, but to the wider historical perspective of his analysis. In his most hostile article he began with the Revolution as an accomplished fact, in another he looked back to Romanticism, 'Jungdeutschland' and the 'Vormärz', but in the present chapter he takes several centuries of history, including Shakespeare and the Reformation, in an attempt to place the recent Revolution in a historical and literary context.

Initially he reiterates the anti-revolutionary attitudes which mark his writings over the previous decade: the enthusiastic expectation which proves to have been mistaken or based on ignorance, the painful experience which leaves all participants exhausted or depressed, and the Reaction which involves

rejection of the past. He admits in a fatalistic manner the necessity of revolutions, but claims that their fruit profits only later generations.⁴⁹ As an example he contrasts the literature of the 1840s and 1850s; the former produced no masterpieces because free expression was stifled. In 1848 freedom of expression was granted temporarily, but no masterpieces ensued, and the general standard deteriorated. From these suppositions he concludes that a period of social and political turmoil can prepare the way for later works of art but cannot produce them itself: "Nur ein durchweg gesunder Boden bringt auch gesunde Früchte; nur wahrhaft gesunde, in sich befriedigte Zeiten bringen auch wahrhaft vollendete Kunstwerke hervor."⁵⁰

The above argument has been used by Prutz on other occasions, but he generally emphasised the negative aspects, the aridity of 1848's legacy. Now, however, he proves to be more willing to allow for the possibility that a new fruitful period initiated by the Revolution may still be undergoing a slow gestation. This development may be partly a historical insight on the part of Prutz and partly a final desperate attempt to rationalise his inability to find a cure for the literary malaise of the 1850s. In the latter case a historical doctrine allowing him to postulate an impending revival provides the necessary basis for an honourable solution.

In his quest for historical documentation he turns first to the French Revolution of 1789. Because France has traditionally dominated Europe by virtue of her political system and her culture, Prutz considers the great Revolution to be an excellent example of his theory: "Die französische Literatur ist nie dürftiger und inhaltsloser gewesen, als gerade zu der

49. Robert Prutz, p. 65.

50. Robert Prutz, p. 67.

Zeit, da das nationale Leben Frankreichs in den allerkühnsten und höchsten Wogen ging."⁵¹ Even the Reformation, he claims, remained unfruitful in a literary sense for a long period. He contrasts the universal significance of the Reformation, and its long-term impact on history and literature as well as on religion, with the fact that Shakespeare, who immediately followed the Reformation period, derived none of his inspiration from it. Prutz hesitates to place 1848 on a plane with the great men and events of past centuries, but he senses the beginning of a new age which will determine the questions left unanswered by the Frankfurt Parliament - the questions of German nationhood, power and greatness, the questions for which Bismarck was to provide the answers.

After making his prognosis, he justifies it on the somewhat naively fatalistic grounds that the Revolution could not have been permitted to occur if it had not contained some deeper purpose. He speaks reverently of the wisdom of history, whose uprooting of kingdoms and people must have been directed to a specific end. When compared with his earlier denunciations of revolution, his reasoning allows the reader to recognise the degree of Prutz's entanglement with the era of 1848. Unable to escape it, he resigns himself to justifying it, albeit tentatively, and his rationalisation of the Reaction recalls Herwegh's aphorism: "Man vergoldet uns die Ketten, um sie vor dem Roste zu sichern."⁵² In contrast to his earlier remarks on re-established censorship, he now suggests that the 'Nachmärz' situation is more liberal than the pre-revolutionary system, and he points out that the Prussian constitution, despite its imposition from above, is an advance on 'Vormärz' absolutism.⁵³

⁵¹ Robert Prutz, p. 68.

⁵² Georg Herwegh, p. 173.

⁵³ Robert Prutz, p. 73.

He moves to firmer territory, in his adulation of the 'Nachmärz', when he turns from alleged political gains to the improvements in literature. Here too a perceptible modification of his earlier hostile and negative stance is involved. He praises the popularisation trend of the literature of the 1840s, which has led to a closer bond between author and public. He also perceives a diminution of the ivory tower attitudes which produce the type of writing he describes as "Literatur der Literatur." The sense of urgency and crisis brought about by the Revolution has fortunately stripped literature of the aesthetic self-preoccupation which Prutz associates with Romanticism and 'Jungdeutschland'. In the latter case one recalls the narcissistic inclusion of 'jungdeutsch' works in the reading matter of Gutzkow's heroine Wally die Zweiflerin, who actually criticises Wienbarg, Laube and other colleagues of the author by name in the pages of the novel.⁵⁴

In the place of literature for its own sake, 1848 has resulted in another type of reaction which produces works of an industrial or realistic character. Although the latter is in line with his earlier calls for literary realism and, more significantly, in line with the philosophy behind Das Engelchen, he appears to have lost some of his enthusiasm for it, as he describes dubiously the attempts of some contemporary writers to achieve solidarity with the People by creating plots populated by workers and peasants, sprinkled with dialect expressions and enlivened by events deriving from the court news in the daily papers: "Sie (...) drehen ein haarsträubendes Gespinnst aus Mord- und Diebs- und Meineidsgeschichten + und

54. Karl Gutzkow, Wally die Zweiflerin. Mannheim, E. Löwenthals Verlagshandlung, 1835 (Deutsche Neudrucke, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), p. 19.

siehe da, der 'deutsche Sittenroman' ist fertig."⁵⁵ As each of the elements he enumerates can be found in the plot of Das Engelchen, one may conclude that Prutz has renounced not only the style of the Wochenstube but also that of his early post-revolutionary novels. He has realised that militant realism can result in just as much distortion as romantic idealism, and that conflict between the two is opposed to the Hegelian moderation he has advocated: "Der wahren Kunst ist der Idealismus ebenso unentbehrlich als der Realismus + denn was ist alle Kunst selbst anders, als die ideale Verklärung des Realen, die Aufnahme und Wiedergeburt der Wirklichkeit in dem ewig unvergänglichen Reiche des Schönen?"⁵⁶

In accordance with this new synthesis, any variation from the concept of harmony and beauty will inevitably be counterbalanced dialectically by its opposite, so that human progress itself remains constant. Presumably Prutz's digression to the French Revolution and the Reformation has contributed to his new insight into the long-term significance of 1848 as a temporary excursion from the historical and literary mainstream.

On this basis he becomes more willing to view sympathetically the popular literary forms of the 'Nachmärz'. He sanctions the sentimental themes of the lyric as a necessary outlet for youthful expression, whereas he had described them in 1854 as "die verdünnte, abgeschwächte Fortsetzung der alten Romantik."⁵⁷ Even the current attempts to revive the epic form of German literature receive greater approval than in the earlier 'Epos und Drama in der deutschen Literatur der Gegen-

55. Robert Prutz, p. 77.

56. Robert Prutz, p. 77.

57. Robert Prutz, Neue Schriften. Halle, G. Schwetschke'scher Verlag, 1854, p. 183.

wart'.

Finally, Prutz creates a further virtue out of necessity when he gives approval to the fact that, by contrast with its exalted position in the 'Vormärz' era, literature has been relegated to its rightful position and no longer acts as a substitute for participation in the political process. Thus the public interest previously accorded to the opinions of writers has been refocused on the more accessible 'Nachmärz' type of politician, and the effect on literature has been a positive one: "Überhaupt ist der ganze Ton unserer Literatur in diesen letzten Jahren bei weitem bescheidener, maßvoller (...) geworden."⁵⁸

By concluding thus, he appears to have won a victory for his view of what constitutes the best literature, whereas in fact he has modified his prescription to suit the prevailing circumstances and, without actually being forced to admit it, has fallen victim to that attitude of resignation so prevalent in the post-revolutionary era.

The writings of Prutz discussed in this work cover a period of fifteen years, neatly bisected by the Revolution. During this time it becomes increasingly apparent that consistency was not one of his main characteristics. As a liberal, his political counterpart would have occupied the Centre in the Frankfurt Parliament, the group which suffered perhaps the greatest disappointment and withdrew into conservatism and silence. Basically Prutz is motivated by the suspicion of revolution outlined in the quotation at the beginning of Section II of the present chapter. Werner Spilker defines that attitude

58. Robert Prutz, Schriften zur Literatur und Politik. Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1973, p. 82.

in a more precise fashion: "Eins vor allem hatte er in diesem Jahr gelernt, nämlich daß Revolutionen nicht den Idealzustand im Staatsleben darstellen."⁵⁹

More harshly, one can perceive in Prutz's post-revolutionary philosophical bankruptcy, his ineffectual calls for moderation, his continual search for synthesis or even for compromise, and the shifting attitudes which allowed him both to condemn what he had previously sanctioned and to sanction that which he had condemned, a reflection of Schlaupkopfs comment in Die politische Wochenstube:

"Glaublich ist's,
Denn mit den meisten Liberalen ist es so:
Gesinnung ist 'ne Wasserpflanze meistentheils,
Die aus des Herzens Felsengrunde nicht, o nein,
Nur aus dem Sumpf der Redensarten sich erhebt."⁶⁰

⁵⁹Werner Spilker, p. 21.

⁶⁰Robert Prutz, 'Die politische Wochenstube'. In: Der deutsche Michel. Revolutionskomödien der Achtundvierziger. Ed. Horst Denkler, Stuttgart, Reclam, 1971, p. 94.

Chapter Two : Post-revolutionary evaluation of 1848

I

Contemporary critics and the history of 1848

"The success of the revolution discredited conservative ideas: the failure of the revolution discredited liberal ideas."

A. J. P. Taylor

At the outset of a chapter which appears to deviate from the literary mainstream of the preceding analysis, one must establish the fact that the men with whose views of revolutionary events and politics we shall be dealing were the same ones who wrote novels, plays and poems both before and after the Revolution. In other words, they were neither historians, nor social scientists nor politicians, but nevertheless, in accordance with the predominant tenor of post-romantic literature, they voiced opinions not only on the state of literature but also on the state of political life. Their views on the latter subject therefore merit a place in any analysis of the literature of the 1840s, but at the same time it is wise to bear in mind the fact that in venturing outside their own specialised field, they immediately became somewhat less qualified to make an objective judgement. Their statements on the Revolution are compromised not merely by the fact that their own chronological proximity to it obviously militated against calm evaluation, but by their lack of training as historians. Although many writers gave titles such as 'Erinnerungen'¹ to their studies of the Revolution, and thus excused their biased nature, others broadcast their prejudice under the guise of serious documentation. Some writers in the former category will concern us

1. Of the writers discussed in the present work, see especially the 'Erinnerungen' of Karl Frenzel, Gustav Freytag, Adolf Pichler and Ludwig Pietsch.

briefly as an ideological balance to the study of a particularly blatant example of the latter, which follows in the second part of the chapter - Johannes Scherr's history of the Revolution, Von Achtundvierzig bis Einundfünfzig. Thus it will be shown that Scherr's judgement of history, like Prutz's attitude to literature, need not be viewed in isolation.

Like Stifter, whose views we discussed at the equivalent juncture in the previous chapter, Franz Grillparzer regarded the Revolution with a conservative's suspicion and distaste. 'Meine Erinnerungen aus dem Revolutionsjahre 1848'² fulfils the solemn promise of the title. He possesses what Bietak calls a "Kassandrablick"³ which prevents him from feeling any optimism about the present or future, despite the fact that he had suffered personally under 'Vormärz' absolutism. His account of the Revolution is brief and from a purely personal perspective. At first scornful of popular demonstrations in Vienna, he is later moved to admiration of their courage. In general, he disparages the French influence on the Revolution, the lack of direction in mass enthusiasm and the absence of discipline in the demands for freedom. His anti-revolutionary views resemble those of the historian Scherr but are expressed as no more than private opinions.

At a similarly personal level, although from a different political perspective, the minor Austrian writer Robert Hamerling looks back on the Revolution in his Stationen meiner Lebenspilgerschaft⁴ of 1889. In 1848 he had been enthusiastically and naively involved in the popular movement centred on

2. Franz Grillparzer, Sämtliche Werke Vol. IV. Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965, pp. 204-20.

3. Wilhelm Bietak, p. 244.

4. Robert Hamerling, Stationen meiner Lebenspilgerschaft. Hamburg, Verlagsanstalt & Druckerei AG, 1889.

the Viennese 'Aula'. Like Fontane, he can appreciate the absurdity of his actions, such as the brandishing of guns so ancient and unreliable that they presented greater danger to their inexperienced users than to any potential enemy of the people.⁵ He recalls his composition of passionately nationalistic poems, and his sense of romantic ecstasy as he lay on a hard stretcher awaiting word to patrol the city once more. When the army occupied Vienna, Hamerling demonstrated his disapproval by playing the 'Marseillaise' loudly on the piano. His self-deprecatory reminiscences parallel to some extent Scherr's predilection for emphasising minor absurd details of the Revolution, but in Hamerling's case the intention is less destructive. After forty years, his attitude towards 1848, by contrast to that displayed in Grillparzer's recollections in 1850, has become distilled into one of conciliation: "In Kämpfen dieser Art siegt die Sache, auch wenn die Kämpfer unterliegen, wie wir ja auch wirklich die Errungenschaften von 1848 trotz aller 'Reaktion' heute genießen."⁶

The post-revolutionary writings of Heinrich Laube have already occupied us several times in the preceding chapters. The comprehensiveness of his book on the first German Parliament is surpassed as a contemporary account only by the history written by another delegate at Frankfurt, Friedrich Dahlmann. Laube rarely takes advantage of the small amount of hindsight he enjoys when writing in 1849 about events of the previous year, and thus, despite his transparently conservative stance, he manages to avoid the sweeping disdain affected by Scherr. He covers the facts thoroughly, while remaining constantly aware of his basic grievance against the Revolution - that it failed

5. Robert Hamerling, p. 128.

6. Robert Hamerling, p. 167.

to produce a united Germany: "Betrachten wir unser armes Vaterland im Sommer 49! Das Parlament ist längst zu Ende. Alles ist in den Händen der Kronen - und nie war Deutschland weiter vom Ziele."⁷ 1848's failure to achieve either of the twin goals of unity and freedom is attributed judiciously to the lack of a powerful monarch willing to enact the decisions of the Frankfurt Parliament, and also to the lack of a population educated in the parliamentary process.⁸ His conclusions reveal his personal bias as a member of the 'Paulskirche', for there are other factors which he does not take into account, but apart from his polemical approach to absolute equality as opposed to relative equality,⁹ his history of one aspect of the Revolution has considerable documentary value.

Another former Young German, Karl Gutzkow, judged the political importance of the Revolution in a somewhat more radical manner. His 1850 article, 'Vorläufer oder Nachzügler?', appears to be an aggressive reaction against the Reaction. Like Freiligrath in his poem 'Die Revolution',¹⁰ he refuses to concede defeat for the revolutionary ideal, and accords highest honour to the man who, by articulating his immutable convictions in the crowd of a thousand fools, refuses to don "die Nachtmütze der Resignation,"¹¹ the symbol of passivity often used by Glaßbrenner. Gutzkow continues: "Wer jetzt ausruft: Alles ist verloren, Alles ist eitel und sich die Dinge gefallen läßt, wie sie sind, der war entweder nicht berufen (...), der Nation eine Beachtung seiner Meinung zuzumuthen, oder er hat sich für

7. Heinrich Laube, Vol. II, p. 316.

8. Heinrich Laube, Vol. III, p. 465.

9. e.g. "Gleichberechtigung ist ein edles Ziel, absolute Gleichheit ist ein Ziel für Barbaren." (Vol. I, p. 129)

10. Ferdinand Freiligrath, pp. 95-7.

11. Karl Gutzkow, Vor- und Nachmärzliches Leipzig. Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1850, p. 221.

immer eine zu große, zu schwere Aufgabe auf seine schwachen Schultern geladen."¹² He concedes that the political immaturity shown in 1848 has led inevitably to a Reaction, but imagines it to be of a temporary nature. His interest in the subjective interpretation of history rather than the historical events themselves makes him directly comparable with Johannes Scherr, whose judgement of 1848 and the Reaction will now be examined.

II

Johannes Scherr and a look back in anger

"Über die Zeitereignisse sage ich nichts; das ist Universalanarchie, Weltkuddelmuddel, sichtbar gewordener Gotteswahnsinn!" Heinrich Heine

After his hasty departure from Stuttgart in 1849, Johannes Scherr settled in Switzerland, where he became a lecturer and eventually a professor in history at Zürich's 'Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule'. For another two decades he continued to lecture and to write prolifically on the subject of literature and history. In 1868 he published a historical work which dealt as specifically with the Revolution as had his novel of twenty years earlier. But there the similarity virtually ends. Eine deutsche Geschichte traces the progress of a partly factual, partly fictional Revolution from the point of view of a disappointed but not despairing radical. Von 48 bis 51. Eine Komödie der Weltgeschichte follows the progress of the factual Revolution from the viewpoint of a conservative cynic, thoroughly disillusioned with all aspects of and all participants in the events of 1848. In making this contrast, one must not overlook the fact that Scherr's attitude did not change suddenly, but underwent a gradual transformation during a period in which

12. Karl Gutzkow, p. 227.

he produced over twenty books - novels, 'Novellen' and histories - in which his increasing conservatism becomes apparent. There is, however, some justification in treating his history of the Revolution in conjunction with the short novel of 1850, for they constitute his first and last statements on the subject, while the intervening works, including the better-known story Michel. Geschichte eines Deutschen unserer Zeit¹³ illustrate the stages along the way from one extreme to the other.

At a glance, the post-revolutionary transformation in Scherr's attitude appears to be a most spectacular example of a violent reaction to the Reaction. In his case, a patient search for contradictions or the interpretation of silence as a statement become unnecessary, for the disparity does not need to be sought, but manifests itself at every opportunity. There remains, however, a consistent factor in all of Scherr's analyses: both in a supposed history and a novel, his emotional approach is based on a personal idealism which, in Eine deutsche Geschichte, is stated definitively at the beginning and the end, and in the later history remains implicit. In his work on Schiller he elucidates his approach to writing: "Dieses Evangelium des Idealismus auszubreiten, sei die Aufgabe der Historik und der Kunst."¹⁴ Willibald Klinker interprets it thus: "Er möchte vor allem zeigen, wie er die Dinge sieht und beurteilt und darum mußte er tendenziös werden."¹⁵ Scherr therefore dismisses attempts at objectivity or neutrality as betrayals of his militant ideal or at least as signs of weakness. He defends his view with vehemence:

13. Johannes Scherr, Michel. Geschichte eines Deutschen unserer Zeit. Prag, Markgraf & Comp., 1858.

14. Johannes Scherr, Schiller und seine Zeit. Vol. II. Leipzig, Wigand, 1859, p. 324.

15. Willibald Klinker, Johannes Scherr, Kulturhistoriker. Leben, Wirken, Gedankenwelt. Thayngen-Schaffhausen, Augustin, 1943, p. 108.

"Solange die Geschichte von Menschen mit fünf Sinnen geschrieben wird, solange werden die Historiker (...) ihre Anschauungsweise in die Historik hineinragen. Diese Subjektivität der Geschichtsschreibung (...) mag nur in Regionen bestritten werden, wo der gesunde Menschenverstand aufhört und die abstrakte Duselung begonnen hat."¹⁶

Scherr's militant approach to reality on the basis of a high personal idealism may well be a consistent factor, but the tenets of that idealism change dramatically. In his novel of 1850 he defined his aspirations as being directed towards the establishment of a democratic republic under the leadership of the Fourth Estate. In 1868 his cynicism towards republicanism and socialism indicates that his years of observation from his Swiss vantage point have led to the abandonment of his earlier ideal, but the new attitude which has replaced it is less easy to pinpoint. The whole work is redolent of his definition of history as a "rastloser Kampf zwischen Licht und Finsternis, Wahrheit und Lüge, Recht und Unrecht, Freiheit und Sklaverei,"¹⁷ but in relation to the events of 1848 he tends to adopt a devil's advocate stance in virtually every situation, with the result that the ideal by which he judges it remains more than a little mysterious. In the following pages, an attempt will be made to establish Scherr's basis for judging 1848 and to show how the Reaction affected him.

The work itself is divided into two sections, entitled 'Die Entwicklung', which traces the background to the European year of revolution, followed by the events of March in Prussia and Austria, and 'Die Verwicklung', which examines the Frankfurt Parliament and the triumph of reactionary forces in the later months of 1848.

a. 'Die Entwicklung'

Scherr's characterisation, in his history's subtitle,

¹⁶.Quoted by Willibald Klink, p. 107.

¹⁷.Johannes Scherr, Letzte Gänge. Stuttgart, Spemann, 1887, p.141.

of the period 1848-1851 as a comedy of world history, and his use of Shakespeare's dictum: "All the world's a stage" as a motto, provide at the outset a clue to the selective analysis he proposes to initiate, one in which the ridiculous elements will be emphasised. He devotes a chapter in the 'Vorspiel', which otherwise quickly sketches pre-revolutionary developments in various European countries, to the story of Lola Montez and the Bavarian king, Ludwig I. Admittedly this affair precipitated the Munich Revolution of March 20, but Scherr's early focus on incongruity and absurdity sets the tone for the whole work.

His accounts of the events in France which inspired the German Revolution is interspersed with negative observations about their motivating forces: "Die frohe Botschaft von der Freiheit, Gleichheit und Brüderschaft ist und bleibt der Traum wohlwollender Träumer,"¹⁸ and later he proclaims, in an obvious reaction against his youthful radicalism: "Für die europäische Gesellschaft der zweiten Hälfte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts ist der Despotismus die passendste, ja die einzig mögliche Staatsform."¹⁹ His despairing endorsement of absolutism stems from an apparent insight into the nature of liberalism, the political philosophy which he condemns in both factual and fictional works. His hostility towards the force which triumphed in March but had little idea of how to proceed thereafter can be traced to his black/white philosophy of history. He eschews the moderate approach of liberalism, which constantly sought a middle way between revolution and counter-revolution, between democracy and the courts, between the past and the future.

18. Johannes Scherr, Von Achtundvierzig bis Einundfünfzig. Eine Komödie der Weltgeschichte Vol. I. Leipzig, Wigand, 1868, p. 21.
 19. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 230.

But if equivocating moderation had been the principal cause of the failure of the 1848 experiment, similarly harsh criticism must be accorded, in Scherr's judgement, to other groups in society. The socialists and communists, although insignificant numerically, created sufficient disturbance among the naturally uncouth masses to provide an excuse for equally reprehensible reactionaries to drive the timid bourgeoisie into the bear hug of the Courts, the nobility and the Church.²⁰ In the space of a single paragraph, Scherr thus sweepingly condemns every group involved in the Revolution, and his own ideals become steadily less clear.

The chapter dealing with the Austrian Revolution is entitled 'Ich laß nit schießen',²¹ the words supposedly uttered by the mentally unstable king, Ferdinand II, when informed of a likely confrontation between troops and populace, and is simultaneously an indication of Scherr's scorn for the participants in the Viennese uprising. Even the Archduke Johann, the ill-fated 'Reichsverweser', is cynically described in the same image used by Weerth and Glasbrenner: "Eine der vielen Nullen, welche Anno 1848 recht hoch hinaufgeschraubt worden sind, damit ihre Nullität weithin sichtbar würde."²² Otherwise the principal emphasis is given to inconsistency and indecisiveness. The 'Hofburg' authorities hesitated between resistance and compliance, the bourgeoisie (a word used by Scherr throughout the book) between non-involvement and liberal reform. Furthermore the mob attacks on public buildings, a proletarian action he is inclined to excuse in Eine deutsche Geschichte,²³ now inspire only his scorn: "Freut euch, ihr Gläsermeister

20. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, pp. 270-1.

21. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 273.

22. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 282.

23. See the discussion of the burning of Graf Holzen's mansion, p. 64 above.

von Wien, ihr werdet morgen unendlich viel Arbeit vorfinden."²⁴

In the following chapter, the final one of the 'Entwicklung', Scherr turns to the events of March in Prussia. The essence of his bias is contained in the title, 'Ein Mißverständnis',²⁵ for he emphasises the isolation of the various groups involved in the Berlin Revolution and their ignorance, not only of the long-term goal, but also of the probable reactions of their opposition. Scherr's disillusion with 1848, even after twenty years, remains so great that he seeks to discount it as a revolution by portraying it as a series of coincidences and misunderstandings. What did the crowds of March 18 want? he asks, and provides the answer himself: "Die Wahrheit ist, daß dies in Berlin niemand wußte; und ferner, daß die Berliner zu einem Stück Revolution kamen wie die bekannte Magd zum Kinde."²⁶ In an approach similar to Prutz's, Scherr seeks an explanation for the abstract nature of Berlin's Revolution in the abstract theories of Hegel and in the Prussian inability to act decisively under any authority other than a royal command.²⁷

After tracing the course of events up until Friedrich Wilhelm's surrender to the crowd and the withdrawal of royal troops from the city, Scherr asks rhetorically what should have happened and then, demonstrating solidarity with the forces of absolutism in accordance with his defence of it as the nineteenth century's most suitable form of government, he gives the answer: "Die energische Niederwerfung des Aufstandes oder noch besser die unschwer zu bewerkstelligende Verhütung der Möglichkeit desselben."²⁸ Overlooking the whole 'Vormärz' era of

24. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 300.

25. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 319.

26. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 327.

27. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 328.

28. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 362.

preparation and increasing anticipation, he becomes an advocate of an absolutism far more belligerent than that demonstrated by Friedrich Wilhelm. By adopting such a stance he is able to condemn both the authorities who failed to crush the revolutionary movement and the populace who failed to make full use of their tactical advantage. Because neither side acted decisively, Scherr feels justified in describing the Berlin uprising of March as "ein Mißverständnis von Seiten des Königs wie des Volkes, ein großes Mißverständnis von A bis Z!"²⁹ As a final piece of evidence for the validity of his claim, he cites the plethora of political pamphlets which flooded Berlin, all demanding different goals but together indicative of the hopelessly divided notions of forward progress beyond the initial gains of March.

Scherr's facts can rarely be faulted, and his frequently interspersed opinions have a certain consistency in their superciliousness. At rare moments of commitment, however, the exiled conservative advocates the strong-arm solution in a direct renunciation of his youthful republicanism.

b. 'Die Verwicklung'

If the first part of Von 48 bis 51 blames the absolutist régimes for failing to crush the movements of March, then the second half exposes the liberals' failure to exploit their advantage. In the first chapter, entitled 'Das wilde Parlament', which is an account of the moves leading to the establishment of the National Assembly at Frankfurt, he makes a prolonged attack on the liberalism of 1848. It will be recalled that Scherr's detestation of liberal methods dates back to his novel of 1850, with its strong denunciation of the liberal Count

29. Johannes Scherr, Vol. I, p. 363.

Heinrich, and his attitude remains essentially unchanged.

The language of his denunciation is vituperative, but the argument is closely reasoned. His initial premise lies in the fact that 1848 was only a half-revolution, for it agitated the foundations of society without altering them, and threatened existing authorities without deposing them: "Eine halbe Revolution ist nur eine ganze Insolenz und Impotenz."³⁰ This premise enjoys respectability among more reputable historians such as Wilhelm Mommsen,³¹ Rudolf Stadelmann,³² and the Englishman A.J.P. Taylor, who states succinctly with reference to 1848: Germany reached its turning point and failed to turn."³³ Constantly aware of this situation, Scherrr dissects the philosophy of liberalism which briefly filled the vacuum created by the March days and whose adherents formed the greater proportion of the short-lived March Ministries. Within their philosophy of moderation he identifies three different elements contributing to their failure - the belief that momentary advantage constituted total victory, the continued faith, instilled by absolutist government, in the German citizen's natural submissiveness, and finally their conscious affiliation with the monarchy as a means of avoiding extremism and achieving stability.³⁴ But Scherr goes further into the realm of polemics when he attributes the liberals' lack of enthusiasm for republican solutions to a fear of losing the privileges associated with monarchical rule: pensions, sinecures and subsidised idleness. On the other hand, he points out that the liberals of 1848 acted constantly in accordance with the tenets of their

30. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 4.

31. Wilhelm Mommsen, p. 122.

32. Rudolf Stadelmann, p. 186.

33. A.J.P. Taylor, The course of German history: a survey of the development of Germany since 1815. London, Hamish Hamilton, 1946, p. 68.

34. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 5.

spineless philosophy and thus maintained a certain consistency: "Daher ist es nur logisch, daß der richtige, liberale Biedermann alles und alle, was und welche im Anschauen, Fühlen und Denken über das allerheiligste Mittelmaß, über das Ordinäre hinausreicht und hinwegragen, mit giftigem Argwohn, mit blindem Hasse betrachtet, verlästert und verfolgt."³⁵ The worst legacy of all, he concludes, was the total absence of leadership throughout Europe in 1848, as a result of the predominance of a philosophy of compromise and weakness.³⁶

In the context of Scherr's entire work, the denunciation of liberalism at the outset of Volume II accords strangely with the earlier, similarly vehement attack on the princes' lack of authority during March. Abandoning a viewpoint akin to that of Metternich or Crown Prince Wilhelm of Prussia, who advocated greater use of the military in subduing Berlin,³⁷ Scherr has swung over to the apparent perspective of a republican, castigating the liberal leaders for acting moderately instead of radically. The ferocity of his attack on a philosophy whose very nature entails moderation and an absence of ideological fervour contains an aspect of futility which Heine was quick to perceive with regard to similarly critical remarks made by Laube in his history of the Frankfurt Parliament. "Du hast kopflose Menschen guillotiniert,"³⁸ commented Heine.

However, Scherr's seemingly republican-oriented attitude towards liberalism proves to be as short-lived as his ostensibly absolutist condemnation of the weak monarchical régimes, for he soon focuses critical attention on the left-wing politicians

35. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 8.

36. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 10.

37. J.G. Legge, pp. 322-3.

38. Heinrich Heine, Briefe 1850-1856. Säkularausgabe. Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1972, p. 54.

of 1848, Hecker, Struve and their supporters. Although their desire to transform a half-revolution into a whole one is, by contrast with the liberal programme, both laudable and logical, their failing lies in their inability to distinguish between the ideal and the practicable and thus to recognise their own weakness: "Wenn Hecker und Struve alles, was von Terrorismus in ihnen, zusammengethan hätten, es würde nicht ausgereicht haben, auch nur einen Floh zu terrorisieren."³⁹ On the other hand, their forthright approach to the social problems of 1848 appears more positive than the evasiveness typified in the words of Römer, a delegate to the 'Vorparlament', whose statement lends credibility to Scherr's indictment of liberal philosophy. During a debate on the poor and underprivileged, Römer proclaimed: "Meine Herren, Sie alle theilen gewiß die Sympathie für diese Leute, und ich bitte durch Aufstehen den Beweis zu geben."⁴⁰ Again Scherr reveals a predilection for the apt fact or quotation which reduces the Revolution to the realm of absurdity.

In a chapter entitled 'Putsch-Idyll', he returns to the theme of republicanism, which had fascinated writers of the 'Vormärz' and provided the ultimate ideal in his own novel Eine deutsche Geschichte. Hecker's attempt to set up a republic in South Germany contains ridiculous elements which Scherr does not hesitate to exploit; he mentions the fact that the cavalry possessed only one horse and that Georg Herwegh's ill-fated Legion accepted only 2,000 francs from the French government: "Mit 2000 Francs eine Legion von mehr als 1000 Mann ausrüsten zu wollen, war allerdings sehr dichterisch."⁴¹ But the futility of the republican attempt to impose a minority view, however

39. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 25.

40. Quoted by Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 40.

41. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 56.

laudable, on an unreceptive majority does not occupy Scherr's principal attention; the creator of the intelligent proletarian Robert remains willing to sanction the motives of the radical republicans, and he reserves his severest criticism for the "average man," or, as Glaßbrenner would have called him, 'der deutsche Michel', whose endurance of tyranny renders useless any radical attempt to achieve change: "Der Durchschnittsmensch ist eine wesentlich niederträchtige Kreatur, die es durchaus regelrecht und ordnungsmäßig findet, daß die Völker in der Knechtschaft stumpfer Gewohnheit verharren und mit schäfiger Ergebung alles hinnehmen, was die Gewalt über sie zu verhängen geruht."⁴² In issuing this denunciation, Scherr fills virtually the only remaining gap on a descending scale of social condemnation, begun in Volume I with the princes, moving steadily through various political groupings and now arriving at the general populace.

A further victim, perhaps unexpected in an ostensibly historical work, presents itself in the form of contemporary literature which, according to Scherr, has supported the republican cause only as long as it has been expedient to do so. He speaks disdainfully and slanderously of former Young Germans who have supposedly switched from radicalism to "Säbelbrutalismus," and he mentions "die lyrischen Prutzer und Trutzer"⁴³ who have abandoned the republican credo in order to advocate a constitutional monarchy. The sarcastic reference to Prutz is well-founded, as we have seen, but the whole excursus reveals the same selective amnesia on the part of Scherr as was mentioned earlier in connection with Prutz. Scherr in fact displays it to an even more remarkable degree, for he refers negatively

42. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 100.

43. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 110.

to writers who withdrew to an isolated perspective, "von wo aus sie den weiteren Verlauf der Ereignisse nur noch mit bitter-humoristischen Glossen begleiteten."⁴⁴ As a description of his own semi-historical technique in the very work under consideration, it could hardly be more apt. Scherr plays the game of elusiveness to such an extreme degree that he can appear to dissociate himself from his own literary perspective and criticise it as if it belonged to someone else.

The inconsistency of literature, he claims, can be traced to its status as a business, subject to the laws of supply and demand, and consequently reflective of public taste. In contrast to Prutz, who viewed the writers of the 'Vormärz' as the architects of public preference, Scherr sees them as its willing slaves, devoid of firm convictions of their own. He interprets the silence of the Reaction as proof of his contention, for he describes it as an age of "Achselzucken und Spottlächeln."⁴⁵ He views the post-revolutionary moderation of literature similarly to Prutz, insofar as the reading public was no longer interested in republican or revolutionary themes, but diverges from Prutz's approach in his cynicism towards literature's moral malleability: "Das Literaturgeschäft (...) verlegte sich daher auf andere Zweige der Fabrikation und machte in Liberalismus, Legitimismus, Korporalismus, Obscurantismus und Philistrismus."⁴⁶

The workings of the Frankfurt Parliament, as the embodiment of operative liberalism, predictably provoke some of the historian's severest criticism, rivalling that of Marx in its intensity.⁴⁷ His analysis is penetrating, and somewhat more

44. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 112.

45. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 112.

46. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), pp. 111-12.

47. For some of Marx's observations on the subject in Revolution und Konterrevolution in Deutschland, see p. 113 above.

convincing than the sympathy displayed by modern historians of liberal tendencies,⁴⁸ for he needs to make no apology for exposing the causes of the Parliament's undeniable failure to achieve any of its objectives. Because success is the standard by which historical events are judged, the National Assembly appears to be, in Scherr's words, the greatest swindle of the nineteenth century.⁴⁹ The liberal parliamentarians of May 1848 faced two alternatives - a radical continuation of the Revolution in the direction of republicanism, which would be inconceivable in the context of their quiescent philosophy, or a determinedly right-wing alliance with the monarchies, which would be more logical but equally unpalatable in terms of the recent victories of March. Their constant search for a non-existent middle way ensured their defeat, as did a flaw which the exiled Scherr imputes to the intellectual German's character: "Denn wo drei Deutsche beisammenstehen, haben sie sicherlich vier Meinungen."⁵⁰ In tracing the Assembly's progress he reiterates his anti-liberal arguments several times, but presents no further insights. However, in a later chapter he sketches a personality type which he believes has augmented the confusion of political activity in 1848 - the "Kautschukmänner"⁵¹ who profess not even the moderation of liberalism but, like their colleagues in literature, adopt an expedient attitude towards events and side with whichever faction appears to hold the upper hand. Although this tendency features in the characteristics of the 'Michel' type as seen by Glasbrenner, it could also be partially applied to Scherr's historical technique, which moves agilely from condemnation to support and back to

48.e.g. Theodor Heuss and Rudolf Stadelmann.

49.Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 184.

50.Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(1), p. 188.

51.Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(2), p. 88.

denunciation.

The final chapters of Scherr's history of the Revolution deal in turn with the events of September, October and November, as the radical impetus was lost and absolutism reasserted itself. As in the last section of Eine deutsche Geschichte, Scherr becomes an increasingly gloomy witness to the inevitable collapse of the movements he had scorned even in their moments of success. In 'Frankfurter September', the half-hearted Prussian campaign against Denmark over the Schleswig-Holstein issue, the initially nationalistic fervour of the Assembly and the humiliating peace agreement at Malmö arouse his disgust not only with the Frankfurt Parliament, which accepted German defeat and had to be protected by Prussian troops from the angry crowds, but also with one of the key personalities of 1848, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV: "Wäre ein Mann an der Spitze des preußischen Staates gestanden," he claims, "so würde ihnen dieses traurige Geschäft erspart worden sein,"⁵² a remark which indicates a return to his argument, first stated in Volume I, that decisive action on the part of the monarchy in March could have crushed the revolutionary fiasco in its early stages. The angry demonstrations against the National Assembly's conciliatory decision on the Malmö agreement are seen by Scherr to mark the end of its credibility, although on the other hand he characterises the multitude as "Canaille!"⁵³ At a historical moment of great confusion, his analysis, based on general recrimination, appears equally confused; he blames the King for failing to deal firmly with Denmark, the Assembly for accepting Germany's humiliation, the Frankfurt mob for acting in an undisciplined manner, and the Prussian troops for

52. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(2), p. 163.

53. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(2), p. 189.

re-establishing the rule of the sword. Before proceeding to the events of October he pauses to consider the filling of the ideological vacuum left by the rout of liberalism. From his vantage-point of the late 1860s he discounts the importance of the radicalism evident in the Frankfurt proletariat: "Der Kommunismus ist ein wüster Schnapsrauschtraum, die rousseau'sche Demokratie dagegen die lichte Vision eines jugendlichen Phantasten,"⁵⁴ and concludes his apocalyptic vision of conflict between capital and labour with a denunciation of counter-productive social struggles.

'Wiener Oktober' corresponds closely, in fact and in futility, to the events of the previous month in Frankfurt. The national issue, the murder of the right-wing figure,⁵⁵ and the military takeover of the city, all take place against the background of the continuing but irrelevant deliberations of the "Schwatzklubb in Sankt Paul."⁵⁶ In keeping with the elegiac tone of his dénouement, Scherr reiterates his earlier suggestion as to the principal cause of the Revolution's collapse: "Ach, wo war in jenem Oktober, wo war überhaupt im Jahre 1848 ein wahrhaft großer Mann, ein Nummer-Eins-Mann? Nirgends."⁵⁷ It is a justified claim, and convenient in terms of Scherr's policy of universal condemnation, because it applies to monarchy, liberals, republicans and proletariat alike, without involving the necessity to distinguish between the widely varying results if any of the participating groups in the Revolution had in fact produced such a leader.

'Berliner November' provides him with the final evidence of a revolutionary collapse, in which a weak monarch, relieved

54. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(2), p. 186.

55. Lichnowski in Frankfurt; the Austrian War Minister Latour in Vienna.

56. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(2), p. 238.

57. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(2), p. 252.

of the necessity for strong action, merely occupies the vacuum left by the middle-class renunciation of radical solutions.⁵⁸ He takes the proletarian attack on Berlin's arsenal, a move prompted by bitterness at the arming of only the middle class, as a valid example of the degeneration of Berlin's Revolution since March, describing it as "nur ein pöbelhafter Bummelwitz der geräuschvollsten Sorte, eine Dummheit, welche der Mehrheit der Bürgerschaft Berlins den Geschmack an der 'glorreichen Revolution' tief verleidete."⁵⁹

Scherr overlooks the period of Reaction in 1849 and ends his history with the dismissal of the Prussian Assembly and the installation of the Brandenburg Ministry. The title of the work indicates that he initially intended to continue his analysis over a four-year period, but in view of the cynical tone of the two volumes he actually produced, it is not surprising that he became disillusioned with the project and terminated it in November 1848. Indeed it was scarcely necessary to trace the progress of the Reaction, for the author himself personifies it in his constant forward projections from the events of the Revolution and especially in his all-pervasive pessimism.

Scherr's pessimism can be described as the new ideal which replaced the radical republicanism of his youth. The biographer Willibald Klinke observes judiciously: "Immer deutlicher zeigen sich bei ihm pessimistische Züge; es ist, als wenn er sich von seinen in der Revolutionszeit erlebten Enttäuschungen nie mehr ganz hätte erholen können,"⁶⁰ while Haggen-

58. Scherr imagines Friedrich Wilhelm's thoughts thus: "Lassen wir das parlamentarische Sauerkraut noch ein bißchen gähren und dampfen und sich einbilden, es sei das Haupt- und Staatsgericht in Preußen. Bald wird kommen der Tag, wo man den ganzen Kohl auf die Gasse wirft." (Vol. II(2), p. 291)

59. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(2), p. 286.

60. Willibald Klinke, p. 94.

macher points out: "Er kämpfte oft grollend unter dem Feldzeichen eines düstern Pessimismus."⁶¹ Although Haggenmacher considers this attitude to be a logical expression of the pain which accompanies Scherr's recognition of the inaccessibility of his earlier ideals, one might draw from the historical work Von 48 bis 51 the further conclusion that pessimism, seemingly incompatible with idealism, has developed into an end in itself. He himself speaks vaguely of an "Urideal",⁶² but it seems to become increasingly unattainable and is transformed into an anti-ideal, especially virulent in discussion of the period marking his severest personal defeat. Conversely, he manages to prevent a pessimistic view from developing into a Byronic passivity or an expression of emotional 'Weltschmerz': it is "nicht der Pessimismus der Verzweiflung, sondern der tiefen Mißstimmung."⁶³

It is unlikely that a serious student of history would ever use Scherr's work as a textbook. His stance, although chronologically far removed from 1848, betrays on every page the bitterness of one who was actively involved, and who has never come to terms with the fact of his defeat. Furthermore, his work is weakened as a historical text by its constant subjectivity which, as we have seen, is partly deliberate, but also stems from his qualities as a novelist: "Dem Historiker Scherr kam eben oft der phantasie- und gefühlvolle Schriftsteller Scherr in den Weg; und wo die Geschichte längst gesprochen hat, da spricht er trotzdem noch einmal in sehr temperamentvoller Weise sein Verdammungsurteil."⁶⁴

The emotional reaction to each situation also leads to

61. Otto Haggenmacher, p. XXXIV.

62. Quoted by Otto Haggenmacher, p. XXXI.

63. Otto Haggenmacher, p. XXXIII.

64. Willibald Klinker, p. 107.

a certain amount of inconsistency and even contradiction. By judging persons and events in accordance with an elusive private ideal, Scherr seems to feel justified in issuing universal indictments, but in his eagerness to play the rôle of a secular devil's advocate, he tends to overlook previous statements. As a brief but telling example of the Revolution's impact on his philosophy, one could compare two statements, one before 1848 and one after, on the subject of that widespread refuge of the Reaction period, resignation. In 1847 he wrote: "Die Güter des Lebens sind für alle Menschen da, und der Trieb zum Genuß ist weitaus natürlicher und vernünftiger als alle Gebote der Entsagung und einer saft- und kraftlosen Resignation."⁶⁵ But the following years of disappointment bring him to a totally different conclusion: "Der große Dichter des 17. Jahrhunderts, Baruch Spinoza, wußte wohl, was er tat, als er meinte, das leidige Welträtselproblem ließe nur eine notdürftige Lösung zu: Resignation!"⁶⁶ Scherr's insight, symptomatic of the attitude adopted by countless others in the post-revolutionary period, relegates to a position of insignificance the helpless fury of his historical work. On its final page, in tacit acceptance of this helplessness, he calls for Humour, the true heroine of his Komödie der Weltgeschichte, to come to his aid⁶⁷ as a balance to the pessimism of his philosophy and also, one imagines, as a means of transforming his impotent look back in anger into scorn and, finally, into amusement.

65. Quoted by Willibald Klinker, p. 211.

66. Quoted by Willibald Klinker, p. 213.

67. Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(2), p. 327.

Conclusions to Part III .

"Never has there been a revolution so inspired by a limitless faith in the power of ideas; never has a revolution so discredited the power of ideas in its result."¹ The historian A.J.P. Taylor writes of a political phenomenon, but because ideas also constitute the raw material for imaginative writers, his words apply with equal validity to the literature of 1848. To call this Revolution a watershed in political and literary progress is thus to place in a more positive perspective an event which has been judged by contemporaries and later writers alike in a generally negative manner.

The men whose post-revolutionary writings have been treated in the preceding pages emerge as pale shadows of their 'Vormärz' selves - as apologists, as moderate conservatives, as pessimists and cynics. In their attempts to come to terms with the past which shaped them, determined their philosophies and plotted their subsequent descents into obscurity, they describe, analyse, criticise that past with a combination of distortion and over-simplification. Not the sentimental distortion mentioned in Part I as a legacy of the Romantic movement in literature, but the embarrassed distortion of selective amnesia, the last refuge of the militant who changes his mind. Just how great an influence, albeit negative, that 1848 exerted on literature can be indirectly calculated in terms of the selective amnesia evinced by Prutz and Scherr. Their rejection of pre-revolutionary aspirations represents such a total change of direction that any reference to that era on a level of personal involvement becomes impossible. An enthusiastic liberal is transformed into a sombre conservative; a radical republican

1. A.J.P. Taylor, p. 68.

becomes a cynical pessimist.

The simple expedient of forgetting is sometimes replaced by an oversimplified process of recall, often encountered in the form of a doubtful synthesis or a pithy summary. In ostensibly historical works they strike a discordant note, until one remembers the fact that the writer of fiction composes his post-revolutionary study of literature, history or politics not primarily as a textbook but as a reaction to the Reaction or even, in the case of Prutz, as a means of visible thought clarification.

Because the writings under consideration involve an authorial monologue and a process of rationalisation, new ideas can rarely be expected to emerge. Prutz continually postulates a literary future of whose nature he has little inkling, while Scherr bases his tirades against the politicians of 1848 on an equally sterile philosophy of militant pessimism. Both write in an atmosphere of ideological uncertainty which is more patent in the works of Prutz, who lacks the obscurantist rodomontade of Scherr, but neither can be personally censured for an uncertainty which pervaded the era in which they lived. The catastrophe of 1848 had discredited the power of ideas, but no solution to the problems left in abeyance had yet been intimated. In terms of the convenient German collocation, it was a transitional age of "vorbei" and "noch nicht." Scherr hints at the solution to be offered by Bismarck when he laments the lack of a "Nummer-Eins-Mann,"² but carries the thought no further.

²Johannes Scherr, Vol. II(2), p. 252. Adolf Pichler expresses more emphatically a similar prophetic yearning when the Revolution had collapsed: O leitete uns ein Genius Cäsar, ein Diktator, der es ist durch seinen gewaltigen Geist, nicht aber durch die Stimmzettel von Rednern, ein Diktator, der das Wortgeklingel kosmopolitischer Phrasendrechsler verachtet, ein Diktator, der mit eiserner Faust alle Schranken und

Associated with the question of a contribution to new ideas is the question of merit within the history of literature. One can scarcely claim other than minimal literary value for works devoted to the clarification of a past problem, but their documentary value, in the context of comparison with fictional works by the same authors, is considerable. Without Von 48 bis 51, Scherr's view of the Revolution as portrayed in Eine deutsche Geschichte would be totally unrepresentative and misleading. Similarly, Das Engelchen and Die politische Wochenstube take on new dimensions within the framework of Prutz's later theories on the unhappy state of drama and the novel, together with his prescriptions for the future.

The Reaction is therefore an essential, if anti-climactic adjunct to a study of 1848 in both a political and a literary sense. In historical and literary parlance, the term 'Vormärz' has enjoyed greater attention than the 'Nachmärz', whose counterbalancing effect has often been overlooked, perhaps as a result of the tedium of its aspect. The preceding pages have shown, it is hoped, that the resolution, or at least the articulated termination, of the aspirations evoked in the novels and satires treated in Parts I and II can be found only in works produced by the same authors during the two decades following the Revolution.

(continued from p. 211) Schränkchen niederschlägt, und dabei nicht unseren politisch Sentimentalen rechts und links Bücklinge macht, ein Diktator, dem weder vornehmer noch geringer Pöbel jene Worte Plutarchs sagen darf: 'Wir haben dich zum Herrscher gemacht, damit wir dich beherrschen!'"(pp.104-5)

CONCLUSION

Although we have reached the end of our analysis of the literary revolution, our conclusion is open-ended. A study of those writers who maintained a reactionary stance in their writings both before and after 1848 would yield quite different results. Even with the same subject matter as used in this work, a difference in emphasis, such as the more concentrated treatment of language, style or form rather than content, would produce different but valuable conclusions. However, within the deliberately restricted field of the preceding analysis, certain general trends have been established.

The problem of pinpointing the relationship between literature and society, a question familiar to the theoretician of literature but so far without a satisfactory answer, has been treated in its practical application. The period of the 1840s in German literature illustrates a degree of interaction between literary writing and contemporary events which is so close that the next generation, and even the generation whose youthful period occurred in the 1840s, showed no interest in works which reflected the concerns of an era both outdated and discredited. The disillusion expressed in later years by the authors of 'Vormärz' literature paralleled and perhaps encouraged the attitude of disdain for the period shown by literary historians and critics. As Jost Hermand points out with regard

to 'Jungdeutschland', the radical writers of that time have been subsequently treated as "eine fragwürdige Clique, (...) die man im 'Tempel der deutschen Literatur' wie einen ungebetenen Gast behandelte."¹ The 'Vormärz', like 'Jungdeutschland' before it, was seen to represent an untypical digression from the mainstream of the age which is generally characterised by the term 'Biedermeierlichkeit', with its associations of middle-class solidity, industriousness, piety and loyalty to the monarchy. If the 'Biedermeier' ideal was in fact the valid image of the period, then the digression of the 1840s provided a glimpse of the unrest which hitherto and in subsequent years remained behind the façade of serenity.

The period with which we have dealt is characterised by a rejection of 'Biedermeier' values. The writings which immediately precede the Revolution denounce not only the plethora of reactionary monarchies to which the 'Biedermeier' professes allegiance but also the 'Michel' type who represents the negative side of 'Biedermeierlichkeit' itself - the quiescence, the opportunism and the timidity which contributed to the collapse of the Revolution. Men such as Weerth, Glasbrenner and the youthful Scherr fought on two fronts in 1848, opposing both the aristocracy and the middle-class 'Michel' in his various guises of cautious liberal, industrialist or mere philistine. Both groups required to be overthrown before the rule of the Fourth Estate or, in the futuristic terminology of the ideological optimists, the proletariat, could begin. The new theories of Marx and Engels, fresh from the printing presses, were to receive their first practical test, but a fragmented nation which had not even experienced its equivalent of France's

1. Jost Hermand, Von Mainz nach Weimar (1793-1919). Stuttgart, Metzler, 1969, p. 152.

1789, let alone its 1830, could not possibly achieve, within the short period of its first revolutionary upheaval, the kind of social change prescribed in the Communist Manifesto and postulated in the novels of Weerth and Scherr.

1848, as has been stated many times, was a revolution of ideas, in which the opinions expressed in contemporary literature assume special relevance. But the ideas proved to be far in advance of what was socially and politically attainable within a system approximately one hundred years behind its Western European neighbours. The fact that the writers of the 'Vormärz' and Revolution have enjoyed a slight renaissance of interest in their works in recent years constitutes a tribute to the progressive nature of their theories. The problems of national unification, democratic self-determination, the differences between socialism and communism, and proletarian revolution, all have greater application to twentieth century conditions than to those with which the authors of the Fragment eines Romans, Eine deutsche Geschichte and Die politische Wochenstube were familiar. For them, the absolute impossibility of realising any of the social and political ideals expressed in their works led to the frustration, the disillusion and the cynicism which have formed a leitmotif in the present work. In the context of political Reaction, their apparent rejection of the ideas propounded during the Revolution need not necessarily prove that they were wrong, or merely the fruit of irresponsible youthful exuberance in a period of relaxed government control, but rather that they seemed inappropriate to a society in which social and political development lagged behind economic and industrial progress.

It should not be overlooked, in this regard, that the Revolution, and specifically the National Assembly of Frankfurt,

the epitome of an intellectual structure burdened with a surfeit of ideas, have been accorded new respectability since World War II. The leaders of the new Federal Republic, charged with the difficult task of seeking out democratic precedents in German history, found in 1848 an early expression of the ideals they hoped to continue. Urgency was given to the restoration of the war-damaged 'Paulskirche' in time for the centenary of the Revolution, and the first Federal President, Theodor Heuss, praised the progressive thinking of the men of the Revolution in his book 1848: Werk und Erbe. In 1963 President John F. Kennedy was taken by his Federal German hosts to the 'Paulskirche', where he sealed the rehabilitation of its reputation: "No assembly ever strove more ardently to put perfection into practice. And though in the end it failed, no other building in Germany deserves more the title of 'cradle of German democracy'."² Of course, within the diversity of philosophies expressed in that period and in the Parliament itself, it is possible to select only those appropriate to the style of democracy currently in vogue, just as, in the other half of Germany, the radical type of revolutionary ideology, embodied not by the National Assembly but by men such as Georg Weerth and his colleagues, has been rediscovered and lauded as a precursor of later developments.

We have shown that Weerth, Scherr, Prutz and Glasbrenner, who have some claim to be counted among the 'philosophes' of 1848, mirrored the socio-political concerns of its preparation, progress and aftermath. In their novels they documented social evils with a didactic zeal which was slightly distorted by the legacy of the Romantic movement, for like the Revolution itself, they sought solutions in both the past and the future. Their

2. John F. Kennedy, The Burden and the Glory. New York, Harper & Row, 1964, p. 113.

satires, transcending the throng of similar publications in the March days of licence, sought to adjust to the temporary transformation of their previous ideal into the new reality, just as the Revolution faltered after its initial swift victories. And in the 'Nachmärz' years of silence and rationalisation, their mood paralleled that of the political Reaction. Few could share the long-term optimism of a contemporary who wrote: "Allein keine Schande, sondern ein Ruhm ist es, seinen Zeitgenossen voraus zu sein, und deshalb zwar erfolglos in der Gegenwart zu bleiben, wohl aber den Samen einer großen Zukunft auszuwerfen."³ It was a faint hope, but the only one.

Stuttgart and Christchurch,
1973-1975.

3. Quoted by Tim Klein, p. 421.

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